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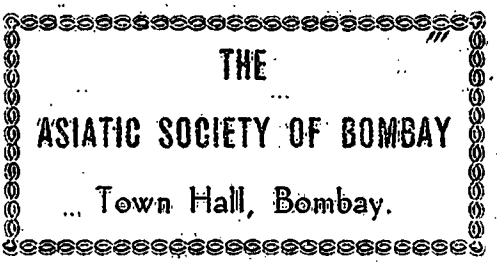

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TRADITIONS
OF
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LANCASHIRE.

83239

BY

J. ROBY, M.R.S.L.

"I know I have herein made myself subject unto a world of judges, and am likest to receive most controulment of such as are least able to sentence me. Well I wote that the works of no writers have appeared to the world in a more curious age than this; and that, therefore, the more circumspection and wariness is required in the publishing of any thing that must endure so many sharp sights and censures. The consideration whereof, as it hath made me the more heedy not to displease any, so hath it given mé the less hope of pleasing all." VERSTEGAN, *Rest, dec. Ant.*

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE SEER:

" *Petruchio.* Pray, have you not a daughter
Call'd Katharina, fair and virtuous?
" *Baptista.* I have a daughter, sir, called Katharina."

TAMING OF THE SHREW. Act II. Scene 1.

" What sudden chance is this, quoth he,
That I to love must subject be,
Which never thereto would agree,
But still did it defie?"

KING COPHETUA AND THE BEGGAR-MAID.

" Yet she was coy, and would not believe
That he did love her so;
No, nor at any time would she
Any countenance to him show."

THE BAILIFF'S DAUGHTER OF ISLINGTON.

THE SEER.

THE wonderful exploits of Edward Kelly, one of which is recorded in the following narrative, would, if collected, fill a volume of no ordinary dimensions. He was for a considerable time the companion and associate of John Dee, by courtesy called Doctor, from his great acquirements,—performing for him the office of seer, a faculty not possessed by Dee, who was, in consequence, obliged to have recourse to Kelly for the revelations he has published respecting the world of spirits. These curious transactions may be found in Casaubon's work, entitled "A true and faithful Relation of what passed for many Years between Dr. John Dee and some Spirits,"—opening out another dark page in the history of imposture and credulity. Dee says, that he was brought into unison with Kelly by the mediation of the angel Uriel. Afterwards he found himself deceived by him, in his opinion that these spirits, which ministered unto him, were messengers of the Deity. They had several quarrels beforetime; but when he found Kelly degenerating into the worst species of the magic art for purposes of avarice

and fraud, he broke off all connexion with him, and would never afterwards be seen in his company. Kelly, being discountenanced by the doctor, betook himself to the meanest practices of magic, in all which, money and the works of the devil appear to have been his chief aim. Many wicked and abominable transactions are recorded of him. Wever, in his Funereal Monuments, records that Kelly, in company with one Paul Waring, who acted with him in all his conjurations, went to the churchyard of Walton-le-Dale, near Preston, where they had information of a person being interred who was supposed to have hidden a considerable sum of money, and to have died without disclosing where it was deposited. They entered the churchyard exactly at midnight, and, having had the grave pointed out in the preceding day, they opened it and the coffin, exorcising the spirit of the deceased until it again animated the body, which rose out of the grave, and stood upright before them. It not only satisfied their wicked desires, it is said, but delivered several strange predictions concerning persons in the neighbourhood, which were literally and exactly fulfilled.

In Lilly's Memoirs we have the following account of him:—

"Kelly outwent the doctor, viz. about the elixir and philosopher's stone, which neither he nor his master attained by their own labour and industry. It was in this manner Kelly obtained it, as I had it related from an ancient minister, who knew the certainty thereof from an old English merchant resident in Germany, at what time both Kelly and Dee were there.

"Dee and Kelly being on the confines of the Emperor's dominions, in a city where resided many English mer-

chants, with whom they had much familiarity, there happened an old friar to come to Dr. Dee's lodging, knocking at the door. Dee peeped down the stairs:—'Kelly,' says he, 'tell the old man I am not at home.' Kelly did so. The friar said, 'I will take another time to wait on him.' Some few days after, he came again. Dee ordered Kelly, if it were the same person, to deny him again. He did so; at which the friar was very angry. 'Tell thy master, I came to speak with him and to do him good, because he is a great scholar and famous;—but now tell him, he put forth a book, and dedicated it to the Emperor. It is called *Monas Hieroglyphicas*. He understands it not. I wrote it myself. I came to instruct him therein, and in some other more profound things. Do thou, Kelly, come along with me:—I will make thee more famous than thy master Dee. Kelly was very apprehensive of what the friar delivered, and thereupon suddenly retired from Dee, and wholly applied unto the friar, and of him either had the elixir ready made, or the perfect method of its preparation and making. The poor friar lived a very short time after:—whether he died a natural death, or was otherwise poisoned or made away by Kelly, the merchant who related this did not certainly know."

Kelly was born at Worcester, and had been an apothecary. He had a sister, who lived there for some time after his death, and who used to exhibit some gold made by her brother's projection.

"It was vulgarly reported that he had a compact with the devil, which he outlived, and was seized at midnight by infernal spirits, who carried him off in sight of his family, at the instant he was meditating a mischievous design

against the minister of the parish, with whom he was greatly at enmity."

It would have been easy to select a more historical statement of facts respecting Kelly; but the following tale, the events of one day only, will, we hope, be more interesting to the generality of readers. It exhibits a curious display of the intrigues and devices by which these impostors acquired an almost unlimited power over the minds of their fellow-men. Human credulity once within their grasp, they could wield this tremendous engine at their will, directing it either to good or bad intents, but more often to purposes of fraud and self-aggrandisement.

THE SEER.

In the ancient and well-thriven town of Manchester formerly dwelt a merchant of good repute, Cornelius Ethelstoun by name. Plain dealing, and an honest countenance withal, had won for him a character of no ordinary renown. His friezes were the handsomest; his stuffs and camlets were not to be sampled in the market, or even throughout the world; insomuch that the courtly dames of Venice, and the cumbrous vrows of Amsterdam and the Hague, might be seen flaunting in goodly attire gathered from the storehouses of Master Cornelius.

His coffers glittered with broad ducats, and his cabinets with the rarest productions of the East. His warehouses were crammed, even to satiety, and his trestles groaned under heaps of rich velvets, costly brocades, and other profitable returns to his foreign adventures. But, alas!—and whose heart holdeth not communion with that word?—Cornelius was unhappy. He had one daughter, whom "he loved passing well;" yet, as common report did acknowledge, the veriest shrew that ever went unbridled. In vain did his riches and his revenues increase; in vain was plenty poured into his lap, and all that wealth could compass accumulate in lavish profusion. Of what avail was this outward and goodly show, against the cruel and wayward temper of his daughter?

Kate,—by this name we would distinguish her, as veritable historians are silent on her sponsorial appellation,—Kate was unhappily fair and well-favoured. Her hair was dark as the raven-plume; but her skin, white as the purest statuary marble, grew fairer beneath the black and glossy wreaths twining gracefully about her neck. Her cheek was bright as the first blush of the morning, and ever and anon, as a deeper hue was thrown upon its rich but softened radiance, she looked like a vision from Mahomet's paradise,—a being nurtured by a warmer sky, and fiercer suns, than our cold climate can sustain. She had lovers, but all approach was denied, and, one by one, they stood afar off and gazed. Her pretty mouth, lovely even in the proudest glance of petulance and scorn, was so oftentimes moulded into the same aspect, that it grew puckered and contemptuous, rendering her disposition but too manifest; and yet—wouldest thou believe it, gentle reader?—she was in love!

Now it so fell out, that on the very morning from which we date this first passage of our history, Cornelius awoke earlier than he was wont. His brow wore an aspect of more than ordinary care. It was but too evident, that his pillow had been disturbed. Thoughts, of more than usual perplexity, had deprived him of his usual measure of repose. His very beard looked abrupt and agitated; his dress bore marks of indifference and haste. A slight but tremulous movement of the head, in general but barely visible, was now advanced into a decided shake. With a step somewhat nimbler than aforetime, he made, as custom had long rendered habitual, his first visit to the counting-house.

The unwearied and indefatigable Timothy Dodge sat there, with the same crooked spectacles, and, as it might seem, mending the same pen, which the same knife had nibbed for at least half a century. The tripod on which rested this grey Sidrophel of accompts, looked of the like hard and impenetrable material, as though it were grown into his similitude, forming but a lower adjunct to his person. It was evident they had not parted company for the last twenty years. Nature had formed him awry. A boss, or hump of considerable elevation, extended like a huge promontory on one shoulder: from the other depended an arm, longer by some inches than its fellow. As it described a greater arc, its activity was proportionate. His grey and restless eyes followed the merchant's track with unwearied fidelity; yet was he a man full sparing of words,—the ever ready "Anon, Master," being the chief burden of his replications. It was like the troll of an old ballad,—a sort of inveterate drawl, tripping unwittingly from the tongue.

The sun was just peeping through the long dim casement as Cornelius stepped over the threshold of his sanctuary. In it lay hidden the mysteries of many a goodly tome, more precious in his eyes than the rarest and richest that Dee's library could boast. No mean value, inasmuch as this celebrated scholar and mathematician, who was lately appointed warden of the college, had the most costly store of book-furniture that individual ever possessed.

"Good morrow, Dodge."

The pen was twice nibbed ere the usual rejoinder.

"Are the camlets arrived from the country?" enquired the merchant.

"Anon, Master;—this forenoon, may be."

"Is the accompt against Anthony Hardcastle discharged?"

"No," ejaculated the grim fixture.

"And where is the piece of Genoa velvet Dame Margery looked out yesterday for her mistress's wedding-suit? I do bethink me it is a good ell too long at the measure."

"Six ells, three nails, and an odd inch, besides the broad thumbs," replied Timothy.

"Right;—she reckoned on a good snip for waste; but let no more be sent than the embroiderer calls for."

"Not a thread," grunted Dodge.

A pause ensued. Some question was evidently hesitating on the merchant's tongue. Twice did his lip move, but the word fell unuttered. The affair was, however, finally disposed of as follows:—

"Hast heard of aught, Timothy, touching the private matter that I unfolded yesterday?"

Cornelius put on as careless an aspect as the disquietude

of his brow could needs carry; but the enquiry was evidently one of no ordinary interest. He twisted the points of his doublet, tied and untied the silk cords from his ruff, waiting Dodge's answer in a posture not much belying the anxiety which he wished to conceal.

"Why, Master, an' it were of woman's humours, the old seer himself could not unriddle their pranks."

Cornelius sighed, making the following hasty reply:—

"Thinkest thou this same seer could not give me a lift from out my trouble?"

"This same seer, I wot," replied Dodge, "is sore perplexed: some evil and mischievous aspect doth afflict the horoscope of the nation—Mars being conjunct with Venus and the Dragon's tail. Now, look to it, Master: it is no light matter that will move him; but almost or ere I showed him the first glimpse of the business, he waxed furious, and said, that he cared not if all the unwed hussies in Christendom were hung up in a row, like rats on a string."

"It is Kate's birth-day," answered the merchant, "to-night being the feast of St. Bartlemy; but, as thou knowest well, the astrologer that cast her figure gave no hope of her amendment, should this day pass and never a husband. Who would yoke with a colt untamed? Oh, Timothy, it were well nigh to make an old man weep! I am a withered trunk. Better had I been childless, than have this proud wench to trouble mine house."

The old man here wept, and it was a grievous thing to see his wrinkled cheeks become, as it were, but the sluices and channels of his tears. Timothy, too, was something moved from his common posture; and once he

endeavoured to turn, as though he would hide his face from his master's trouble.

He sought to speak, but an evil and husky sort of humour settled in his throat, and he waited silently the subsiding of the sorrow he could not quell.

Cornelius raised his head: a sudden thought seemed to animate him. A ray had penetrated the gloomy envelope of his mind; and he peered through the casement, intently eyeing the cool atmosphere.

"I'll visit the cunning man myself, Timothy. If he hear me not, then can I but return, weeping as I went." And with this speech he hastily departed.

Now on this, the morrow of St. Bartlemy, it so happened that Kate also arose before the usual hour, and in a mood even more than ordinarily strange and untoward. Her maiden was like to find it a task of no slight enterprise, the attempt to adorn Kate's pretty person. Not a garment would fit. She threw the whole furniture of her clothes-press on a heap, and stamped on them for very rage. She looked hideous in her brown Venice waistcoat;—frightful in her orange tiffany farthingale;—absolutely unbearable in her black velvet hood, wire ruff, and taffety gown. So that in the end she was nigh going to bed again in the sulks, had not a jacket of crimson satin, with slashed bodice, embroidered in gold twist, taken her fancy. Her little steel mirror, not always the object of such complacency, did, for once, reflect a beam of good humour, which so bewitched Kate, that for the next five minutes she found herself settling into the best possible temper in the world.

"Give me my kerchief, lace scarf, and green silk hood, and my petticoat with the border newly purfled. Hark!—

'T is the bell for prayers. Be quick with my pantofles:—not those, wench—the yellow silk, with silver spangles. Now, my rings and crystal bracelets. I would not miss early matins to-day for the best jewel on an alderman's thumb."

"Anon, lady," replied her waiting woman, with a sort of pert affectation of meekness. But what should cause Kate to be so wonderfully attentive to her devotions was a matter on which Janet could have no suspicions; or, at least, would not dare to show them, if she had.

Kate, being now attired, tripped forth, accompanied by her maid. As she passed the half-closed door of the counting-house, Timothy, with one of his most leaden looks, full of unmeaning, stood edgeways in the opening, his lower side in advance, with the long arm ready for action.

"Fair Mistress, Master Kelly would fain have a token to-day. He hath sent you a rare device!"

"And what the better shall I be of his mummeries?" hastily replied the lady. Timothy drew from his large leathern purse a curiously-twisted riband.

"He twined this knot for your comfort. Throw it over your left shoulder, and it shall write the first letter of your gallant's name. A cypher of rare workmanship."

Kate, apparently in anger, snatched the magic riband, and, peradventure it might be from none other design than to rid herself of the mystical love-knot; but she tossed it from her with an air of great contumely; when, by some disagreeable and untoward accident, it chanced to fly over the self-same shoulder to which Timothy had referred. He made no reply, but followed the token with his little grey eyes, apparently without any sort of aim or

concernment: Kate's eyes followed too; but verily it were a marvellous thing to behold how the riband shaped itself as it fell; and yet to see how she stamped and stormed:—quick as the burst of her proud temper, she kicked aside the bauble, but not until the curl of the letter had been sufficiently manifest. Timothy drew back into his den, leaving the fair maid to the indulgence of her humours. But, in the end, Kate's wrath was not over difficult to assuage. With an air somewhat dubious and disturbed, she hastily thrust the token behind her stomacher, and departed.

The merchant's house being nigh unto the market-cross, Kate's prettily-spangled feet were soon safely conducted over the low stepping-stones, placed at convenient distances for the transit of foot-passengers through the unpaved streets. Near a sort of stile, guarding the entrance to the churchyard, rose an immense pile of buildings, cumbrous and uncouth. These were built something in the fashion of an inverted pyramid: to wit, the smaller area occupying the basement, and the larger spreading out into the topmost story. As she turned the corner of this vast hive of habitation,—for many families were located therein,—a gay cavalier, sumptuously attired, swept round at the same moment. Man and maid stood still for one instant. With unpropitious courtesy, an unlucky gust turned aside Kate's veil of real Flanders point; and the two innocents, like silly sheep, were staring into each other's eyes, without either apology or rebuke. It did seem as though Kate were not without knowledge of the courtly beau: a rich and glowing vermilion came across her neck and face, like the grogeous blush of evening upon the cold bosom of a snow-cloud. But the

youth eyed her with a cool and deliberate glance, stepping aside carelessly as he passed by. She seemed to writhe with some concealed anguish; yet her lip curled proudly, and her bosom heaved, as though striving to throw off, with one last and desperate struggle, the oppression that she endured. In this disturbed and unquiet frame did Kate pass on to her orisons.

It may be needful to pause for a brief space, in our narrative, whilst we give some account of this goodly spark, who had so unexpectedly, as it might seem, unfitted the lady for the due exercise of her morning devotions.

His dress was elegant and becoming, and of the most costly materials. His hat was high and tapering, encircled by a rich band of gold and rare stones. It was further ornamented by a black feather, drooping gently towards the left shoulder. The brim was rather narrow; but then a profusion of curls fell from beneath, partly hiding his lace collar, of beautiful workmanship, and of the newest device. His beard was small and pointed; and his whiskers displayed that graceful wave, peculiar to the high-bred gallants of the age. His neck was long, and the elegant disposal of his head would have turned giddy the heads of half the dames in the Queen's court. He wore a crimson cloak, richly embroidered: this was lined throughout with blue silk, and thrown negligently on one side. His doublet was grey, with slit sleeves; the arm parts, towards the shoulder, wide and slashed;—but who shall convey an adequate idea of the brilliant green breeches, tied far below the knee with yellow ribands, red cloth hose, and great shoe-roses? For ourselves, we own our incompetence, and proceed, glancing next at his goodly person. In size, he was not tall nor unwieldy,

but of a reasonable stature, such as denotes health, activity, and a frame capable of great endurance. He stepped proudly along, his very gait indicating superiority.

The town-gallants looked on his person with envy, and on his light rapier with mistrust. In sooth, he was a proper man for stealing a lady's heart, either in hall or bower. Many had been his victims;—many were then in the last extremities of love. But of him, it was currently spoken, that he had never yet been subjected to its influence.

There be divers modes of falling into love. Some slip in through means of themselves;—to wit, from sheer vanity, being never so well pleased as when they are the objects of admiration. Some, from sheer contradiction, and from the well-known tendency of extremes to meet. Some, for very idlesse; and some, for very love. But in none of these modes had the boy Cupid made arrow-holes through the heart of our illustrious hero; for, as we before intimated, no yielding place did seem visible, as the common discourse testified. How far this report was true, the sequel of our history will set forth.

Now this gay gallant being the wonder and admiration of the whole place, many were the unthrifty hours spent in such profitless discourse by the wives and daughters of the townsfolk, to the great discomfort and discredit of their liege lords. He was at present abiding in the college, where John Dee had apartments distinct from the warden's house, along with his former coadjutor and seer, Edward Kelly. Since the last quarrel between these two confederates, they had long been estranged; but Kelly had recently come for a season to visit his old master: when the Doctor returned from Trebona, in Bohemia, whence

he had been invited back to his own country by Queen Elizabeth, he having received great honours and emoluments from foreign princes. This youth, being son to the governor of the castle at Trebona, was about to travel for his improvement and understanding in foreign manners. At the suit of his parents, Dee undertook the charge of his education and safe return. Since then, young Rodolf had generally resided under Dr. Dee's roof, and accompanied him on his accession to the wardenship. His accent was decidedly foreign, though he had resided some years in Britain, but not sufficiently so for Mancestrian ears to distinguish it from a sort of lisping euphuism, then fashionable at court, and amongst the higher ranks of society. An appearance of mystery was connected with his person. His birthplace and condition were not generally divulged, and though of an open and gallant bearing, yet, on this head, he was not very communicative. Mystery begets wonder and excitement—a sort of interest usually attached to subjects not easily understood. When it emanates from an object capable of enthralling the affections, this feeling soon kindles admiration, and admiration ripens into love. No wonder, then, if all tender and compassionate dames were ready to open upon him their dread artillery of sighs and glances, and the more especially as it soon began to be manifest that success was nigh hopeless. The heart entrenched, the wearer was impenetrable.

Kate's oddly-assorted brain had not failed to run a rambling at times after the gallant stranger. He had heard much of her beauty, and likewise of her uncertain humours. Each fancied the opposite party impregnable; and this alone, if none other motive had arisen, formed a

sufficiently strong temptation to begin the attack. Kate was particularly punctual at church, and once or twice he caught an equivocating glance towards the warden's seat, and he really did at times fancy he should like to play at "*Taming the Shrew.*" Kate was sure the stranger slighted her. He treated her, and her only, with an air of neglect she could not altogether account for, and she was in a month's mind to make the young cavalier crouch at her feet. How this was to be contrived could only be guessed at by a woman, and we will not let the reader into all the secrets of Kate's sanctuary. Suffice it to say, that in so harmlessly attempting to beguile her prey into the snare, the lady fell over head and ears into it herself. In a word, Kate was in love! And this was the more grievous, inasmuch as her lofty bearing hitherto would not allow her to whisper the matter even to her own bosom; and the pent up and smothering flame was making sad havoc with poor Kate's repose.

She had ofttimes suspected the state of her heart; but, instead of sighing, pining, and twanging her guitar to love-sick ditties, she would fly into so violent a rage at her own folly, that nothing might quell the disturbance, until fairly worn out by its own vehemency. No one suspected the truth—yes, one forsooth—gentle reader, canst thou guess? It was no less a personage than our one-shouldered friend Timothy Dodge! How the cunning rogue had contrived to get at the secret is more than we dare tell. Sure enough he had it; and as certain too that another should be privy to the fact, to wit, Edward Kelly the seer. Dodge was a fitting tool for this intrigue, and well able to help him out at a pinch.

Affairs were in this position when our story commenced.

Rodolf had formidable auxiliaries at hand, had he been disposed to make the attack; but his stay was now short—Kate was petulant and perverse—the siege might be tedious. Just on the verge of relinquishing, he met Kate, as we have before seen, going to church. He caught her, for the once, completely off her guard, and the rich blush that ensued, set a crowd of odd fancies jingling through his brain. It was just as the old chimes were ringing their doleful chant from the steeple; but these hindered not a whit the other changes that were set agoing. Not aware of the alteration in his course, he was much amazed when he found himself striding somewhat irreverently down the great aisle of the church, towards the choir, from whence the low chanting of the Psalms announced that service was already begun.

It was the opening of a bright autumnal day. The softened lights streamed playfully athwart the grim and shadowy masses that lay on the chequered pavement, like the smiles of infancy sporting on the dark bosom of the tomb. The screen formed a rich foreground, in half shadow, before the east window. The first beam of the morning, clothed in tenfold brightness, burst through the variegated tracery. Prophets, saints, and martyrs shone there, gloriously portrayed in heaven's own light.

Rodolf approached the small door leading into the choir, when his vacant eye almost unconsciously alighted on a female form, kneeling just within the recess. A ray, from her patron saint belike, darting through the eastern oriel, came full upon her dark and glowing eye. She turned towards the stranger, but in a moment her head was bent as lowly as before, and the ray had lost its power. Rodolf suddenly retreated. Passing through a

side door, he left the church, directing his steps towards the low and dark corridors of the college. Near the entrance to his chamber, on a narrow bench, sate a well-caparisoned page tuning his lute. His attire was costly, and his raiment all redolent with the most fragrant perfume. This youth, when very young, was sent over as the companion, or rather at that time as the playmate of his master. He was now dignified with the honourable title of page, and his affection for Rodolf was unbounded.

"Boy," said the cavalier, something moodily, "come into the chamber. Stay,—fetch me a sack-posset, pr'ythee. I am oppressed, and weary with my morning's ramble."

Now the boy did marvel much at his master's sudden return, but more especially at the great fatigue consequent on that short interval;—knowing, too, that a particularly copious and substantial breakfast had anticipated his departure.

"And yet, Altdorff, I am not in a mood for much drink. Give us a touch of those chords. I feel sad at times, and vapourish."

They entered into a well-furnished apartment. The ceiling was composed of cross beams curiously wrought. On one of these was represented a grim head, in the act of devouring a child,—which tradition affirmed was the great giant Tarquin at his morning's repast. The room was fitted up with cumbrous elegance. A few pieces of faded tapestry covered one side of the apartment. In a recess stood a tester bed, ornamented with black velvet, together with curtains of black stuff, and a figured coverlet. A wainscot cupboard displayed its curiously carved

doors; near to which hung two pictures, or tables as they were called, representing the fair Lucretia and Mary Magdalen. A backgammon-board lay on the window-seat; three shining, tall-backed, oaken chairs, with a table of the same well-wrought material, and irons beautifully embossed, and a striped Turkey rug, formed a sumptuous catalogue, when we consider the manner of furnishing that generally prevailed in those days.

The page sat on a corner seat beneath the window. He struck a few wild chords.

"Not that,—not that, good Altdorff. It bids one linger too much of home-longings."

Here the boy's eyes glistened, and a tremulous motion of the lip shewed how his heart bounded at the word.

"Pr'ythee, give us the song thou wast conning yesterday."

The page began with a low prelude, but was again interrupted.

"Nay, 't is not thus. Give me that wild love-ditty thou knowest so well. I did use to bid thee be silent when thou wouldest have worried mine ears with it. But, in sooth, the morning looks so languishing and tender, that it constrains the bosom, I verily think, to its own softness."

The page seemed to throw his whole soul into the wild melody which followed this request. We give it, with a few verbal alterations, as follows:—

"SONG.

I.

"Fair star, that beamest
In my ladye's bower;
Pale ray, that streamest
In her lonely tower;

Bright cloud, when like the eye of heaven
Floating in depths of azure light,
Let me but on her beauty gaze
Like ye unchidden. Day and night
I'd watch, till no intruding rays
Should bless my sight.

II.

"Fond breeze, that rovest
Where my ladye strays,
Odours thou lovest
Wafting to her praise;
Lone brook, that with soft music bubblest,
Chaining her soul to harmony;
Let me but round her presence steal
Like ye unseen, a breath I'd be,
Content none other joy to feel
Than circling thee!"

"In good sooth, thou canst govern the cadence well. Thou hast more skill of love than thine age befits. But, mayhap, 't is thy vocation, boy. Hast thou had visitors betimes this morning?"

"None, good master, but Kelly."

"What of him?"

"Some business that waited your return. I thought you had knowledge of the matter."

"Are there any clients astir so early at his chamber, thinkest thou?"

"None, save the rich merchant that dwells hard by, Cornelius Ethelstoune."

"Cornelius!" repeated the cavalier, in a disturbed and enquiring tone—"hath he departed?"

"Nay, I heard not his footsteps, since I watched the old man tapping warily at the prophet's door."

Rodolf hastily replaced his hat, and his short and impatient rap was heard at the seer's chamber.

It occupied the north-eastern angle of the building, in the gloomiest part of the house; overlooking, on one side, a small court-yard, barricadoed by walls and battlements of stout masonry, along which were ridges of long lank grass, waving in all the pride of uncropped luxuriance. Another window overlooked the dark-flowing Irk, lazily rolling beneath the perpendicular rock on which the college was built,—the very site of the once-formidable station of Mancunium, the heart and centre of the Roman power in that vast district.

No answer being rendered to this hasty summons, Rodolf raised the latch, but marvelled not a little when he beheld the room apparently deserted. Voices were, however, heard in the inner apartment. Ere he could well draw back, the door slowly opened; nor could he avoid hearing the following termination to some weighty conference.

"'" An hundred broad pieces.—Good! Ere night, thou sayest?"

" Ere the curfew," replied Cornelius.

" Look thee,—'t is but a slender space for mine art to work, and ——"

The seer, as he uttered this with great solemnity, entered the antechamber. The gallant stood there, just meditating a retreat. A flush of anger and confusion passed for a moment over Kelly's visage. Quickly recovering his self-possession, with a severe aspect, he stood before the intruder.

" Art' come to listen, or to watch?" abruptly interrogated the seer. " Both be rare accomplishments, truly, for a youth of thy breeding."

"Nay, good Master Kelly. I came but at thy bidding, and mine ears are not the heavier or the wiser for what they have heard, I trow."

"I thought thee safe at morning prayers."

"Nay," replied Rodolf. "There be too many bright eyes and blushing cheeks for the seasoning of a man's devotions."

"Cornelius, thou mayest retire. What mine art can compass, shall not be lacking at thy need."

The merchant, with a profound obeisance, withdrew. The seer adjusted his beard, carefully brushed the down from his velvet cap, and sate, for a while, as if abstracted from all outward intercourse. His keen, quick eye became fixed, its lustre imperceptibly waning. A cloud seemed to pass gradually over his sharp features, until their expression was absorbed, giving place to a look of mere lifeless inanity. A spectator might have fancied himself gazing at a sage of some remote era, conjured up from his dark resting-place. The wand of death seemed to have withered his shrunk visage for ages under the dim shadow of the grave.

Rodolf, aware that he was not to be interrupted when the gift was upon him, waited patiently the result of the seer's revelations. A considerable time had elapsed, when the cloud began to roll away. His features gradually reassumed the attributes of life, as each separately felt the returning animation. His eyes rested full on the cavalier.

"I have had a vision, Rodolf."

"To me is it not spoken?" enquired he.

"Yea, to thee!"

The seer said this in a tone so hollow and energetic,

and with a look of such thrilling awe, that even Rodolf shuddered. He seemed to feel his glance.

"Listen. The spirit warned me thus:—

"'The stranger that hither comes o'er the broad sea
Shall wed on the night of St. Bartlemy.'"

"Nay, Master Kelly, thine art faileth this once, forsooth. To-night is the saint's vigil, yet lurk I not in the beam of a woman's favour; and ere another year, I may be cured of the simples at my father's dwelling in the old castle."

"The vision hath spoken, and it setteth not forth idle tales. Come to me anon, I will anoint and prepare my beryl, and my divining mirror. Thou shalt thyself behold some of the mysteries, touching which I have warned thee beforetime. About noon return to my chamber."

Rodolf withdrew into his own apartment. His countenance looked anxious and disturbed. He sat down, but his restlessness seemed to increase. His posture was not the most easy and graceful that might be desired, nor calculated to set off his personal advantages, though now become the more needful, if, as the seer predicted, he should wive ere night,—albeit his bride were yet unsought—nor wooed, nor won! Nothing could be more destructive to that easy self-satisfaction, that seductive and insinuating carriage, so essential to the fine gentleman of every age. There was a sort of angular irregularity in his movements, neither pleasant nor becoming; and his agitation so far overcame his better breeding, that he really did cram his beard between, at least, three of his fingers. His rapier had, moreover, poked its way through his cloak, and the bright shoe-roses were nigh

ruined, from the sudden crossings and disarrangements they had undergone. A considerable time had now elapsed: in the meanwhile his impatience had risen to an alarming height, insomuch that we would not have answered for the safety of his red cloth hose and silken doublet, had not noon been happily announced.

Raising the latch of the seer's chamber with considerable eagerness, he found the room completely dark. An unseen hand led him to a seat. Soon he heard a low murmuring chant, as though from voices at a remote distance. By degrees the words grew more articulate, shaping themselves into the same quaint distich that Kelly had repeated—

> "The stranger that hither comes o'er the broad sea
> Shall wed on the night of St. Bartlemy."

This was answered in a voice of considerable pathos; a burst of soft music filling up the interval. Gradually the eye began to feel sensible of the presence of surrounding objects, though, in the ordinary way, nothing could be distinguished; a faculty peculiarly sensitive with the loss of sight, and not quite dormant in the general mass of mankind. A faint gleam was soon perceptible, like the first blush of morning, apparently on the opposite side of the chamber. Becoming brighter, flashes of a dim, rainbow-coloured light crept slowly by, like the aurora sweeping over an illuminated cloud. Suddenly, he saw, or his eyes deceived him, a female form shaping itself from these chaotic elements. But it was observed only during the short intervals when the beams seemed to kindle with unusual brightness. Every flash, however, rendered the appearance more distinct. Dazzled and bewildered, the

heated senses were become the victims of their own credulity, the mind receiving back its own reactions. Taking its impression probably from the occurrences of the morning, the eye rapidly moulded the figure into the likeness of Kate. Her eyes were turned upon him, beaming with that soft and melting expression he had so recently beheld. It was but momentary, or he could have persuaded himself that she looked on him with an air the most tender and compassionate. Never did fancy portray her in a form so lovely. Deep and indelible was the impression; and though it might be

> "The imagination
> Become impregnate with her own desire,"

yet she had performed her office well. Not all the realities, all the blandishments that ever woman displayed, even the most resistless, could have wrought half so dexterously, or gained such swift access to the heart. The vision faded, and a momentary darkness ensued. Suddenly a blaze of light irradiated the apartment. Rodolf beheld, for one short glimpse, a Gothic hall. Kate was there, and a lover kneeling at her feet. Madness seized him, agonizing and intense. In vain he sought the features of his tormentor; the vision had departed, and with it his repose.

A new and overwhelming emotion had overpowered him. It arose with the speed and impetuosity of a whirlwind. All just and sober anticipations, reflections, possibilities, and a thousand calm resolves, were swept as bubbles before the full burst of the torrent.

His first impulse was to seek his mistress. But—she had another lover! The bare possibility of this event

came o'er his bosom like the icy chill of the grave. He shuddered as it passed; but the pang was too keen to return with the same intensity.

Soon, a low murmur, like the distant sough of the wind, gradually approached. A faint light flashed through the chamber. He saw his own wild woods, and the distant castle. It was just visible, dimly outlined on the horizon, as he had last beheld it in the cold grey beam that accompanied his departure. It arose tranquilly on his spirit. The voice of other years visited his soul. His eyes filled; he could have wept in the very overflowing of his delight. He dashed his hand across his forehead; but the pageant had disappeared.

Daylight once more shone into the apartment; but nothing was discerned, save a dark curtain concealing one extremity of the room, and the seer sitting at his elbow.

"Boy, what sawest thou?" said Kelly, not raising his head as he spoke, but intently poring over a grim volume of cabalistic symbols.

"In troth, I am hard put to it, Master Kelly. The maid I have just seen is accounted the veriest shrew in the parish, and one whom no man may approach with a safe warranty. I am like to lose all hope of wiving, if this be the maiden I am to woo. And yet——" The form of the comely suitor he had seen kneeling at her feet just then flashed on his mind, yet cared he not to show the seer how much the phantom had disturbed him.

"Idle tales!" said Kelly. "I wot not but half the gay gallants in the town would give the best jewel in their caps to have one sweet look, one pretty smile from her cruel mouth. 'T is but the report of those whom she

hath slighted with loathing and contempt, that hath raised this apprehension in her disfavour. The churls know not what is hidden beneath this outward habit of her perverse nature, and she careth not to discover. Should some youth of noble bearing and condition but woo her as she deserves, thou shouldest see her tamed, ay, and loving too, as the very idol of her worship, or I would forfeit my best gift."

"But she hath a lover!" said Rodolf, gravely.

"Peradventure she hath; but not of her own choosing, or mine art fails me. Look, this figure is the horoscope of her birth. Thou hast some knowledge of the celestial sciences. The directions are so close worked, that should this night pass and Kate go unwed,—indicated by Venus coming to a trine of the sun on the cusp of the seventh house, she will refuse all her suitors, and her whole patrimony pass into the hands of a stranger — but!" He raised his voice with a solemn and emphatic enunciation. "To-night. Look to it. If not thine, she may be another's."

The listener's brain seemed on a whirl. Thought hurrying on thought, until the mind lost all power of discrimination. The succession of images was too rapid. All individuality was gone. He felt as though not one idea was left, out of the busy crowd, on which to rest his own identity. He seemed a mere passive existence, unable either to execute the functions of thought or volition.

"Go, for a brief space. Thou mayest return at sunset. Yet,"—the seer fixed a penetrating glance on the youth as he retired: "Go not nigh the merchant's dwelling, unless thou wouldest mar thy fortune. To-night—remember!"

In the dim solitude of his chamber, Rodolf sought, in vain, to allay the feverish excitement he had endured. He seemed left to the sport and caprice of a power he could not control. The coursers of the imagination grew wilder with restraint: he recklessly flung the reins upon their neck; but this did not tire their impetuosity. His brain glowed like a furnace; he seemed hastening fast on to the verge of either folly or madness. He threw himself on the couch, when the voice of Altdorff came like a winged harmony upon his spirit. The page was seated in the narrow cloisters,—the lute, his untiring companion, enticing a few chords from his touch, playful and gentle as the feelings that awaked them; some old and quaint chant, scarce worth the telling,—but cherished in the heart's inmost shrine, from the hallowed nature of its associations. A deep slumber crept heavily on the cavalier; but the merchant's daughter still haunted him.—Sometimes, snatched away from his embrace, just as a rosy smile was kindling on her lips; at others, she met him with frowns and menace, but ere he could speak to her she had disappeared. Then was he tottering on the battlements of some old turret, when a storm arose, the maiden crept to his side, but, in an instant, with a hideous crash, she was borne away by the rude grasp of the tempest. He awoke, with the mortifying discovery that the crash had been of a somewhat less equivocal nature. A cabinet of costly workmanship lay overturned at his feet, and a rich vase, breathing odours, strewed the floor in a thousand fragments.

The noise brought up several of the college servitors; to rid himself from the annoyance, he ascended the roof, then protected by low battlements, and leaded, so that a

person might walk round the building and pursue his meditations without interruption.

On this day, teeming with events, Dr. Dee had been too closely engaged in parish duties to give heed to these love fancies, and even had he been ever so free to exercise his judgment in the matter, it is more than likely Rodolf would not have opened to him the proceedings then afoot. He well knew that the Doctor yet bore no good will to Kelly, and might possibly thwart his designs, to the undoing of any good purposed by the strange transactions that had already occurred; he resolved, therefore, to let this day pass, ere he opened his lips on the subject. But how to wile away the hours until evening was a most embarrassing problem. Sleep he had tried, but he found no wish to repeat the experiment; reading was just then foreign to his humour; mathematics must, that day, go unstudied. After beating time to, at least, a dozen strange metres, he hit upon the happy contrivance of writing a love-song, as a kind of expedient to restore the equilibrium. He was rather unskilled at the work; but the pen becomes eloquent when the soul moves it. We will, however, leave him at this thrifty employment, having no design, gentle reader, to make the occasion as wearisome to thee as to himself. Having the power to annihilate both time and space, let us watch the round sun, as he threw his last look, that evening, on the scene of this marvellous history. The old walls of the college, and the church tower, were invested with a gorgeous apparel of light, as though illumined for some gay festival, some season of rejoicing, when gladness shines out visibly in the shape of bonfires and torches. But few moments elapsed,

ere the love-sick youth was again admitted into the dark interior of the seer's dwelling.

A voice whispered in his ear—

"Not a word, hardly a breath, as thou wouldest thrive in thy pursuit. There be spirits abroad, not of earth, nor air. Be silent, and discreet.

A ray suddenly darted across the room. Again the voice was at his ear:—

"Hold thine eye to the crevice when the light enters, and mark well what thou beholdest."

Again he saw his mistress, apparently in a vaulted chamber, lighted by a single lamp: she sat as if anxious and disturbed, her cheek pale and flushed by turns, whilst her eye wandered hurriedly around the room. Some one approached; it was the seer. Rodolf heard him speak.

"Maiden, hast thou a lover?"

The sound seemed scarcely akin to that of human speech. It rose heavily and deep as from the charnel-house, as if the grim and cold jaws of the grave could utter a voice,—the dreary echoes of the tomb! The seer's lips were motionless, whilst he thus continued in the same sepulchral tone.

"I know thou hast. 'T is here thy love would tend." He drew a richly-set miniature from his bosom. It was mounted in so peculiar a fashion that Rodolf started back with the first emotion of surprise. The miniature was his own; a gem newly from the artist, and which he had left, as he thought, in safe custody a short time ago. The voice again whispered in his ear, "Beware!"

He subdued the expression of wonder just rising on his lip, watching the issue with increased interest.

Kate covered her face. She had just glanced at the picture, and her proud bosom heaved almost to bursting.

"Look, disdainful woman! and though thy bosom be formed for love, yet wouldest thou spurn it from thee. I *know* thou lovest him. Nay, chide not; thy brow cannot blast me with its thunders. Go to. I could, by mine art, so humble thee, set thy love so exquisitely on its desire, that thou shouldest lay thy proud womanhood aside—sue and crouch, even if 't were for blows, like a tame spaniel! I have thee in my power, and were not the natural bent of thy dispositions kind and noble-hearted, yet sore beset, and, as it were, overwhelmed by thy curst humours, I had now cast my spells about thee—ay, stricken thee to the dust! Shake off these bonds that enthral thy better spirit, and let not that beautiful fabric play the hypocrite any longer. Why should so fair a temple be the dwelling of a demon?"

A deep sob here told that kindlier feelings were at work; that nature was beginning to assert her prerogative, and that the common sympathies, the tender attributes of woman were not extinguished.

The struggle was short, but severe. With difficulty she repressed the outburst of her grief as she spoke.

"A woman still! 'T is the garb nature put on. I have wrapped a sterner garment about me." A long and bitter sob here betrayed the violent warfare within. It was but for a moment. Affecting contempt for her own weakness, she exclaimed,

"Throw it off? Expose me defenceless to his proud contumely? Even now the cool glance of indifference hath pierced it through!"

Here she arose proudly.

"And what thinkest thou, if I were to stand unarmed, uncovered, before his unfeeling gaze?"

"He loves thee!" hastily rejoined the seer.

"Me!—as soon that bauble learn to love as——"

"Say but one word, and I will bow him at thy feet."

"'T is well thou mockest me thus. To worm out my secret, perchance.—For this didst thou crave my presence? Let me be gone!"

"Thou shalt say 'YES,' Kate, ere thou depart!"

The curtain which divided the apartment suddenly flew aside. The astonished lover beheld his mistress:—not the unreal phantom he had imagined, but a being substantial in quality, and of a nature like his own, though gentler than his fondest anticipations.

The seer departed; but in the end the lovers were not displeased at being betrayed into a mutual expression of their regard.

The operation of the heavenly influences was, in these days, a doctrine that obtained almost universal credit; and it would have been looked upon as a daring piece of presumption, to baffle the prophetic signification of the stars.

On that same night, being the eve of St. Bartholomew, they were married: thus adding one more to the numerous instances on record, where a belief in the prediction has been the means of its accomplishment.

The remainder of Kate's history, and how she crossed the sea, accompanied by her husband, into the wilds of Bohemia, living there for a space; and how she afterwards returned into her own land, will be set forth at some more fitting opportunity.

THE

EARL OF TYRONE.

"Still the fairest are his fuell,
When his days are to be cruell;
Lovers' hearts are all his food,
And his baths their warmest blood;
Nought but wounds his hands doth season,
And he hates none like to reason."

A Hue and Cry after Cupid.—Ben Jonson.

Drawn by G. Pickering

Engraved by Edwd Finden

TYROPH'S BED NEAR ROCHDALE.

London, Published by Longman & Co 1829.

Printed by M'Comie

THE

EARL OF TYRONE.

THE dark and romantic history of the Earl of Tyrone would, of itself, occupy a larger space than these volumes afford. The following episode, connected with his concealment in the neighbourhood of Rochdale, the author does not presume to bring forward as a fact. Yet there are good reasons for supposing that it formed an important era in his life, and was followed very soon after by the Queen's pardon. The importance of this measure may be conceived, when, by some, Elizabeth's depression, and the profound melancholy she exhibited in her latter hours, were attributed to this source. It is said, that she repented of having pronounced his forgiveness; that having always resolved to bring him to condign punishment, she could receive no satisfaction from his submission: while the advantages of her high estate, and all the glories of a prosperous reign, were unable to alleviate her disappointment.

The following is a brief sketch of his life—extracted from generally received authorities.

Hugh O'Neale was nephew to Shan O'Neale, or the Great O'Neale, as he was more commonly called; well-known for his eminent courage, a virtue much esteemed by the half-civilized hordes whom he commanded. He was created Earl of Tyrone by the Queen; but disliking this servitude, and wishful to liberate his country from the English yoke, he entered into a correspondence with Spain; procured from thence a supply of arms and ammunition; and having united many of the Irish chiefs in a dependence upon himself, he began to be regarded as a formidable enemy.

The English found much difficulty in pursuing the rebels into the bogs, woods, and other fastnesses to which they retreated. Sir John Norris, who commanded the English army, was rendered thereby more willing to hearken to the proposals made by Tyrone, and the war was spun out by these artifices for some years. Sir John dying, as was reported, of vexation and discontent, was succeeded by Sir Henry Bagnall. "He advanced to the relief of Blackwater, then besieged by the enemy, but was surrounded in disadvantageous ground. His soldiers, discouraged by part of their powder accidentally taking fire, were put to flight; and, though the pursuit was stopped by Montacute, who commanded the English horse, fifteen hundred men, together with the general himself, were left dead upon the spot. This victory, so unusual to the Irish, roused their courage, supplied them with arms and munitions of war, and raised the renown of Tyrone, who was hailed as deliverer of his country, and patron of Irish liberty." *

* Cox, p. 415.

The unfortunate Essex was afterwards appointed to the command; but his troops were so terrified at the reputation of Tyrone, that many of them counterfeited sickness, and others deserted, fearful of encountering the forces of that daring chief. Finding himself in a great measure deserted, "he hearkened to a message from Tyrone, who desired a conference; and a plain near the two camps was appointed for this purpose. The two generals met, without any attendants. A river ran between them, into which Tyrone entered to his saddle-girth, but Essex stood on the opposite bank."

At this meeting, where "Tyrone behaved with great submission to the lord lieutenant, a cessation of arms was agreed on.* Essex also received a proposal of peace, into which Tyrone had inserted many unreasonable and exorbitant conditions; and there appeared afterwards some reason to suspect that the former had commenced a very unjustifiable correspondence with the enemy." From this time the beam of Essex's favour was obscured,—the issue terminating in his death and disgrace. In the mean time, Tyrone had thought proper to break the truce; "and, joining with O'Donnel and others, overran almost the whole kingdom. He pretended to be the champion of the Catholic faith, and openly exulted in the present of a phœnix plume, which Clement VIII., in order to encourage him in the prosecution of so good a cause, had consecrated, and conferred upon him."† Essex being recalled, the queen appointed Mountjoy as lord deputy. "He found the island in a desperate condition; but being a man of

* Sydney's Letters. † Camden.

capacity and vigour, he immediately advanced against Tyrone in Ulster. He penetrated into the heart of that country, the chief seat of the rebels. He fortified Derry and Mount Norris. He chased them from the field, and obliged them again to shelter in woods and morasses; and by these promising enterprises, he gave new life to the queen's authority throughout the island."

Tyrone, however, still boasted that he was certain of receiving the promised aid from Spain; "and every thing was put in condition for resisting the Spanish invasion, which was daily expected. The deputy, informed of the danger to which the southern provinces were exposed, left the prosecution of the war against Tyrone, who was now reduced to great extremities, and marched with his army into Munster."

"At last, the Spaniards, under Don Juan d'Aquila, arrived at Kinsale; and Sir Richard Piercy, who commanded in the town with a small garrison of one hundred and fifty men, found himself obliged to abandon it on their appearance. These invaders amounted to four thousand, and the Irish discovered a strong propensity to join them, in order to free themselves from the English government, with which they were extremely discontented. One chief ground of their complaint was, the introduction of trials by jury,* an institution abhorred by that people, though nothing contributes more to the support of that equity and liberty for which the English laws are so justly celebrated. The Irish, also, bore a great favour to the Spaniards, having entertained the opinion, that they

* Camden.

themselves were descended from that nation; and their attachment to the Catholic religion proved a new cause of affection for the invaders. D'Aquila assumed the title of general in this "*holy war*," for the preservation of the faith in Ireland; and he endeavoured to persuade the people, that Elizabeth was, by several bulls of the pope, deprived of her crown; that her subjects were absolved from their oaths of allegiance; and that the Spaniards were come to deliver the Irish from the dominion of the devil.* Mountjoy found it necessary to act with vigour, in order to prevent a total insurrection of the Irish; and having collected his forces, he formed the siege of Kinsale by land; while Sir Richard Levison, with a small squadron, blockaded it by sea. He had no sooner begun his operations than he heard of the arrival of another body of two thousand Spaniards, under the command of Alphonso Ocampo, who had taken possession of Baltimore and Berehaven; and he was obliged to detach Sir George Carew to oppose their progress. Tyrone, meanwhile, with Randal, Mac Surley Tirel, Baron of Kelly, and other chieftains of the Irish, had joined Ocampo with all their forces, and were marching to the relief of Kinsale. The deputy, informed of their design by intercepted letters, made preparations to receive them; and being reinforced by Levison with six hundred marines, he posted his troops on an advantageous ground, which lay on the passage of the enemy, leaving some cavalry to prevent a sally from d'Aquila and the Spanish garrison. When Tyrone, with a detachment of Irish and Spaniards, approached, he was

* Camden, p. 645.

surprised to find the English so well posted, and ranged for battle, and he immediately sounded a retreat; but the deputy gave orders to pursue him; and, having thrown these advanced troops into confusion, he followed them to the main body, which he also attacked and put to flight, with the slaughter of twelve hundred men.* Ocampo was taken prisoner; Tyrone fled into Ulster; O'Donnel made his escape into Spain; and d'Aquila, finding himself reduced to the greatest difficulties, was obliged to capitulate upon such terms as the deputy prescribed to him. He surrendered Kinsale and Baltimore, and agreed to evacuate the kingdom. This great blow, joined to other successes gained by Wilmot, governor of Kerry, and by Roger and Gavin Harvey, threw the rebels into dismay, and gave a prospect of the final reduction of Ireland."

The remaining part of Tyrone's history may be gathered from the narrative.

Among other memorable incidents illustrative of his character, it is said that Tyrone, appearing in person to execute a treaty, immediately on the issue of some sanguinary engagement, was requested to sign the terms. "Here is my signature," said he, laying his bloody hand on the deed: "'tis the mark of the Kings of Ulster." Hence, tradition gravely asserts, was the origin of "The bloody Hand" the arms of Ulster! That such a derivation is fabulous, we need not attempt to prove.

* Winwood, vol. i. p. 369.

THE

EARL OF TYRONE.

WHAT a paradox is love!—the most selfish and yet the most disinterested of the passions; the gentlest and yet the most terrible of impulses that can agitate the human bosom; the most ennobling and the most humble; the most enduring and the most transient; slow as the most subtle venom to its work, yet impetuous in its career as the tornado or the whirlwind;—sportive as the smile of infancy, and appalling as the maniac's shriek, or the laugh of his tormentor. 'T is a joy nursed in the warm glow of hope; but who shall reveal the depths of its despair! 'T was given to man as his best boon,—his most precious gift; but his own hands polluted the shrine,—marred the beauteous and holy deposit. The loveliest image was then smitten with deformity, and that passion, the highest and noblest that could animate his bosom, became the bane of his happiness, the destroyer of his peace, and the source whence every attribute of woe hath sprung to afflict and darken the frail hopes of humanity. This may be the dark side of the picture; but unless the breath of heaven sanctify even the purest affections of our nature, they are

a withering blast, blighting its fairest verdure,—a torment and a curse!

The following narrative, floating but indistinctly on the author's memory, and, in all probability, attached to other names, in localities widely apart, is yet, he believes, true as to the more important particulars. The site of a few cottages in a romantic dell in the neighbourhood of Rochdale, is still associated with the memory of the unfortunate Earl of Tyrone. It is yet called "Tyrone's bed." In history, this noble chief is depicted in colours the most hideous and detestable; but if the lion had been the painter, we should have had to contemplate a different portrait. By his countrymen, he was held in the most profound reverence and respect. Beloved by all, he was hailed as the expected deliverer of his native land from wrong and oppression. The most bigoted of his persecutors cannot deny, that oppression, the most foul and inhuman, did exist; and the men, who took up arms for the rescue of their brethren, may be pitied, if not pardoned, for their noble, elevated, and enduring spirit. Let us not be misunderstood as the advocates of rebellion; but surely there are occasions, when the galling yoke of oppression may be too heavy to sustain,—when the crushed reptile may, writhing, turn against him who tramples on it. Let us not do this wrong, even to our enemies, by refusing to admire in them the disinterestedness and magnanimity, which, in others, would have ensured our admiration and applause.

About a mile from the spot we have just named, stood the ancient mansion of Grislehurst:—Surrounded on every side by dark and almost trackless woods, sprung through a long line of ancestry from primeval forests, it reposed

in undisturbed seclusion, still and majestic as the proud swan that basked upon the dark lake before it, secure from intrusion and alarm. Gable-ends and long casements broke the low piebald front into a variety of detail,—a combination of effect, throwing an air of picturesque beauty on the whole, which not all the flimsy and frittered "Gothic" can convey to the mansions of modern antiques. For the timber employed in its erection, a forest must have been laid prostrate. Huge arched fireplaces; chimney pieces, carved with armorial bearings; oak tables, absolutely joisted to sustain their vast bulk; bedsteads, that would not have groaned with the weight of a Titan; the whole intended to oppose a ponderous resistance to the ravages of time and fashion. Not a vestige is left. Those laughing halls echo no more with the loud and boisterous revel; the music of the "many twinkling" feet is gone; scarcely a stone is left upon its fellow,—a few straggling trees alone mark the site. The beech and willow are waving o'er its hearth! Who would build for the destroyer? And yet man, with the end of these vanities in prospect, daily, hourly still builds on; his schemes and his projects extending through the long vista of succeeding ages, as though his dwelling were eternal, and his own fabric should survive the ruin and the doom of all!

A long train of ancestors, bearing the name of Holt, occupied this dwelling as the family mansion. The manor of Spotland, forfeited by the rebellion of Paslew, Abbot of Whalley, was granted by Henry the Eighth to Thomas Holt, afterwards knighted in Scotland by Edward Earl of Hertford, in the thirty-sixth year of the reign of that monarch. The present possessor of the same name,

grandson to Sir Thomas, resided at Grislehurst during the latter part of Elizabeth's reign and that of James. He married Constance, the daughter of Sir Edward Littleton, of Pillaton Hall, Stafford. One son, Francis, and a daughter named Constance, were the fruit of this union. At the commencement of our narrative, he had been for some years a widower, and his son was then absent on foreign travel.

It was in the memorable year 1603, the last of Elizabeth. The rebellion in Ireland had been smothered, if not extinguished; and the great O'Neale, Earl of Tyrone, and King of Ulster, together with many other chiefs, were forced to remain concealed in woods and morasses. Outlawed and outcast, some of them crossed over into England, remaining there until pardoned by the Queen.

Constance was now in her nineteenth year. Bright as her own morn of life, she had seen but few clouds in that season of hope and delight. Sorrow was to her scarce known, save in the nursery-tales and wild ballads of the surrounding district. When the glowing morn was overcast, she was unprepared, unfitted for the change. The storm came, and the little sum of her happiness, launched on this frail and perishing bark, was wrecked without a struggle!

One evening, in the full glare of a dazzling sunset, the light streaming like a shower through the dark foliage of the valley, she had loitered, along with her old nurse, in the dell to which we have before alluded. The glowing atmosphere was just fading into the dewy tint which betokens a fair morrow. To enjoy a more extended gaze upon the clouds, those gorgeous vestures of the sun, Constance had ascended, by a winding path, to the edge of a

steep cliff overhanging the river. She stood for some minutes looking towards the west, unconscious of the loose and slippery nature of the materials beneath her feet, and of her near approach to the brink. On a sudden the ground gave way, and she was precipitated headlong into the river! Nurse Agnes, who stood below, watching her young mistress, not without apprehension as to the consequences of her temerity, was stricken motionless with horror. There seemed to be no help. Fast receding from all hope of succour, Constance was borne rapidly down the stream. Suddenly, with the swiftness of a deer from the brake, a figure bounded from an opposite thicket. He seemed scarcely to leave his footmarks on the long herbage ere he gained the river's brink. Plunging into the current, he succeeded in rescuing the maiden from her perilous condition. He laid her gently on the bank, beckoning to her attendant, and was speedily out of sight. The aged Agnes, with trembling hands, relieved Constance by loosening the folds from her throat; and almost ere she had wrung out the water from the raven locks of her inanimate mistress, the stranger returned. He carried a cordial, with which he moistened her lips; the old woman chafed her temples, resorting to the usual modes of resuscitation then in practice; and, in the end, Constance opened her eyes. A heavy sob accompanied this effort. She looked wildly round, when she met the deep gaze of the stranger. With a faint shriek, she hid her face in the bosom of her attendant, who, overjoyed at her recovery, could scarcely refrain from falling at the feet of her deliverer. She turned to express her thanks, but he was gone.

It was not long ere several domestics, alarmed at their

absence, came in search; and Constance, borne gently along, was soon restored to her anxious parent. But he looked thoughtful and disturbed when the stranger's person was described, evidently averse to hold any communication on the subject. Nurse Agnes grew eloquent in his praise, until the following conversation that same evening in the kitchen turned aside the current of her opinions.

"A rough gray cloak, gossip, thou sayest?" again enquired a hard-featured hind from the chimney-corner.

"I tell thee a cloak, and a cap turned up in front. He doused it off nobly, and took to the water like a spaniel!"

"Why 't is the wild man of the woods!" said another listener, who had hitherto been silent, but whose remark seemed to strike terror into the whole group. They looked round as if anticipating a visit from this fearful personage. Dame Agnes crossed herself, and muttered her prayers with great dispatch; something was at length audible and articulate, as follows:—

"Mercy on me! my days are numbered. If it should indeed be this incarnate,—forgive the thought!—we are all dead creatures. The very horses and kine stagger, and fall into fits at times, when they come home, and it is all along of 'em having seen or smelt the brimstone from the pit. Davy had two died last week, and he was sure they had either seen the de'il or his deputy,—this same gray man of the woods. Woe 's me that I should ha' lived to behold this child of perdition!" The old woman here gave way to an outburst of sorrow, that prevented any further disclosures.

"It is about a three month agone since this same wild man was first seen," said the old seneschal, whose office,

though of little use, was still filled up in the more ancient establishments. "I saw him myself once, but I shook until the very flesh seemed to crawl over my bones. They say he neither eats nor drinks, but is kept alive in the body by glamour and witchcraft. He'll stay here until his time is done, and then his tormentors will fetch him to his prison-house again. Ye should not have tarried in the wood after sunset."

"That would I not," sharply replied Agnes: "but the child, poor thing, would look at the daylight as it lingered on the hill-top, and I thought no harm in't."

"Like enough. He dares not abroad, if so much as the value or size of my thumbnail of the sun's rim were left above the hill!"

"Come, Gaffer, strike up a merry trowl;" said a thin squeaking voice, from a personage almost hidden behind a copious supper of broken meat and pastry. But whether the party thus addressed was too much alarmed to let the current of his spirit run bubbling from the spring of either mirth or minstrelsy, or he was too deeply buried in his own thoughts, it were needless to enquire. The request for a while passed by unheeded.

Gaffer Gee was the ballad-monger of the whole district. He kept on a comfortable and vagabond sort of existence, by visiting the different mansions where good cheer was to be had, and where he was generally a welcome guest, both in bower and hall. His legendary lore seemed inexhaustible; and, indeed, his memory was like an old chest full of scraps continually rummaged. He knew all the scandal and family secrets throughout the parish, and had a quick eye at detecting either a love affair or a feud.

He composed a number of the wild ballads that he sang or recited, or at least put them into that jingling and quaint rhythm, acquired by habitual intercourse with the phraseology peculiar to these popular descants. On hearing a story, he could readily shape it into verse, extempore, too, upon occasion; and many were the jokes that rebounded from his theme, whether in hall or kitchen. It was pleasant to watch his little grey eye, and the twinkling lashes, as they rose and fell, varying the expression of his lips. A slight lisp gave an air of simplicity to his ditties, which never failed to charm his auditors. He could throw the simplest expression over his features, which made the keen edge of his rebukes infinitely more cutting and effective. But the prevailing tone of feeling in him, was sad and oppressive. These wandering minstrels had, from remote ages, been held as seers, and a peep into futurity was often supposed to accompany their poetical inspirations; a superstition not confined to any particular locality, but obtaining a widely disseminated belief in all climes and nations, where imagination assumes her sway, and dares to assert her power.

After a short space, and without any invitation, the ballad-maker, like some Pythian priestess on her tripod, began to exhibit manifestations of the *afflatus*. The spirit of song seemed to be stealing upon him, and in a moment the listening auditory were still. In substance, he half recited, half sung, the following ballad:—

"'Maiden, braid those tresses bright,
Wreathe thy ringlets from the blast;
Why those locks of curling light,
Heedless to the rude winds cast?

"'Maiden, why that darkened brow?
From those eyes, once dimmed with weeping,
Lurid gleams are gathering now,
O'er their pale wan shadows creeping.'

"Silent still the maid pass'd by,
Near nor voice nor footstep came.
Sudden, cleaving earth and sky,
Flash'd a brand of arrowy flame!

"'Maiden, turn that gaze on me,
Onwards why so madly bent?'
Still no stay, no pause made she
Through that kindling element.

* * * * *

"Now, the midnight chant is stealing,
Mass and requiem breathing near;
Hush'd the blast, as if revealing
Sounds to earth that Heaven might hear.

"From yon pile, soft voices swelling
Dirge and anthem for the dead;—
Demon shrieks, their lost doom yelling,
Tend Lord Rudolph's dying bed.

"Holy men, with song and prayer,
Fain would shrive the passing soul;
Fiend-like whispers, to his ear,
Winds, in muttering curses, roll.

"Ere his last lone shuddering cry,
To his couch the maiden came;
On his breast, she silently
Bent an eye of ravening flame.

"One wild shriek the sufferer sent,
Ere life's last frail link might sever;
Laugh'd the maiden, as she leant
O'er that form, to cling for ever.

" Closer to his heart she press'd;
Scorch'd, the quivering flesh recoil'd;
Unconsumed his burning breast,
While that grim tormentor smiled.

" 'Now revenge!' the maiden cried,
'I have bartered Heaven for this;
Mine thou art, proud Rudolph's bride,
Mine, by this last demon kiss.'

" Tower, and battlement, and hall,
Scathed as with a thunder-stroke,
Flash'd through midnight's dusky pall,
Twined in wreaths of living smoke.

" O'er that gulph of yawning flame
Horrid shapes are hovering;
Monstrous forms, of hideous name,
To the bridal-bed they bring.

" 'They come!—they come!' their frantic yell,
On a wave of billowy light
Sudden rose (so marvellers tell)
The maiden and her traitor knight.

" The moon looks bright on Rudolph's towers,
The breeze laughs lightly by,
But dark and silent sleep the hours,
The lone brook murmuring nigh.

" The lank weed waves round thy domain,
The fox creeps to thy gate;
Dark is thy dwelling, proud Chieftain,
Thy halls are desolate!"

The legend we have thus rendered. His own idiom and versification, as we have already observed, were of a more unintelligible sort, though better suited perhaps to the fashion of the time, and the capacity of his hearers.

But a gloom still pervaded the once-cheerful hearth, and the night wore on without the usual symptoms of mirth and hilarity.

Holt of Grislehurst held the manorial rights, and was feudal lord over a widely-extended domain, the manor of Spotland descending to him by succession from his grandfather.—His character was that of a quiet, unostentatious country gentleman; but withal of a proud spirit, not brooking either insult or neglect. This night, an unaccountable depression stole upon him. He strode rapidly across the chamber, moody and alone. The taper was nigh extinguished; the wasted billet grew pale, a few sparks starting up the chimney, as the wind roared in short and hasty gusts round the dwelling. The old family portraits seemed to flit from their dark panels, wavering with the tremulous motion of the blaze.

Holt was still pacing the chamber with a disturbed and agitated step. A few words, rapid and unconnected, fell from his lips.

"Rebel!—Outcast! I cannot betray thee!"

"Betray me!" echoed a voice from behind. Turning, the speaker stood before him. It was the athletic form of the stranger, wrapped in his grey cloak and cap of coarse felt, plumed from the falcon's wing.

"And who speaks the word that shall betray me? A King,—a fugitive! Yet, not all the means that treachery can compass, shall trammel one hair upon this brow without my privity or consent."

"Comest thou like the sharp wind into my dwelling?" enquired Holt, in a voice tremulous with amazement.

"Free as the unconfined air; yet fettered by a lighter

bond,—a woman's love!" returned the intruder. "Thou hast a daughter."

The Lord of Grislehurst grew pale at these words. Some terrific meaning clung to them. After a short pause, the stranger continued:—

"Thus speak the legends of Tigernach, and the bards of Ulster, rapt into visions of the future:—'*When a king of Erin shall flee at the voice of a woman, then shall the distaff and spindle conquer whom the sword and buckler shall not subdue.*' That woman is yon heretic queen. A usurper, an intruder on our birthright. Never were the O'Neales conquered but by woman! I have lingered here, when the war-cry hath rung from the shores of my country. Again the shout hath come, and the impatient chiefs wait for my return. But——"

The warrior seemed to writhe during the conflict. His hands were clenched, and every muscle stiffened with agony. Scorn at his own weakness, and dread, horrible, undefinable dread, as he felt the omnipotent power mastering his proud spirit. The man who would have laughed at the shaking of a spear, and the loud rush of the battle, quailed before a woman's hate, and a woman's love.

"And what is thy request to-night?" said Holt.

The stranger answered, in a voice of thunder,

"Thy daughter!"

Tyrone, for it was he, seemed nigh choaking with the emotion he sought to suppress.

"Nay," he continued, "it must not be. Oh! did I love her less, she had been mine!"

"Thine?" suddenly retorted her father, somewhat scornfully. "And who gave thee this power over woman's

spirit? Thou hast not even had speech of her, much less the means to win her favour."

An almost supernatural expression seemed to gather on the features of the chieftain. His eye, rolling through the vista of past years, began to pause, appalled, as it approached the dark threshold of the future. He appeared lost to the presence of surrounding objects, as he thus exclaimed with a terrific solemnity—

"When the dark-browed Norah nursed me on her lap, and her eye, though dark to outward sense, saw through the dim veil of destiny, it was thus she sang, as she guarded my slumbers, and the hated Sassenach was in the hall:—

"'Rest thee, baby! light and darkness
Mingling, o'er thy path shall play;
Hope shall flee when thou pursuest,
Lost amid life's trackless way.

"'Rest thee, baby! woman's breast
Thou shalt darken o'er with woe;
None thou lookest on or lovest,
Joy or hope hereafter know.
Many a maid thy glance shall rue,
Where it smites it shall subdue.'

It was an evil hour, old man, when I looked upon thy daughter."

Holt, though of a stout and resolute temper, was yet daunted by this bold and unlooked-for address. He trembled as he gazed on the mysterious being before him, gifted, as it seemed, with some supernatural endowments. His unaccountable appearance, the nature of his communications, together with his manner and abrupt mode of

speech, would have shaken many a firmer heart, unprepared for these disclosures.

"What is thy business with me?" he enquired, with some hesitation.

"To warn thee;—to warn thy daughter. She hath seen me. Ay, to-night. And how runs the prophecy? Let her beware. I have looked on her beforetime. Looked on her! Ay, until these glowing orbs have become dim, dazzled with excess of brightness. I have looked on her, till this stern bosom hath become softer than the bubbling wax to her impression; but I was concealed, and the maiden passed unharmed by the curse. To-night I have saved her life. A resistless impulse! And she hath looked on me." He smote his brow, groaning aloud in the agony he endured.

It may be supposed, this revelation did not allay the apprehensions of the listener. Bewildered and agitated, he turned towards the window. The pale moon was glimmering through the quiet leaves, and he saw a dark and muffled figure in the avenue. It was stationary for a while; it then slowly moved towards the adjoining thicket, and was lost to his view. Holt turned to address his visitor, but he had disappeared. It was like the passing of a troubled dream, vague and indistinct, but fraught with horrible conceptions. A cloud seemed to gather on his spirit, teeming with some terrible but unknown doom. Its nature even imagination failed to conjecture. His first impulse was to visit his daughter. He found the careful nurse by her bedside. As he entered the room, Agnes raised one finger to her lips, in token of silence. The anxious father bent him over his child. Her sleep was heavy, and her countenance flushed. A tremor passed

over her features. A groan succeeded. Suddenly she started up. With a look of anguish he could never forget, she cried,—

"Help. Oh, my father!" She clung around his neck. In vain he endeavoured to soothe her. She sobbed aloud, as if her heart were breaking. But she never told that dream, though her haggard looks, when morning rose on her anxious and pallid countenance, shewed the disturbance it had created.

Days and weeks passed by. The intrusion of the bold outlaw was nigh forgotten. The father's apprehensions had in some degree subsided; but Constance did not resume her wonted serenity. Her earliest recollections were those of the old nursery rhymes, with which Agnes had not failed to store her memory. But the giant-killers and their champions now failed to interest and excite. Other feelings, than those of terror and of wonder, were in operation, requiring a fresh class of stimulants for their support,—tales of chivalry and of love, that all-enduring passion, where maidens and their lovers sighed for twice seven years, and all too brief a trial of their truth and constancy!

As she listened, her soul seemed to hang on the minstrel's tongue; that erratic troubadour, Gaffer Gee, being a welcome and frequent visitor at Grislehurst.

One night he had tarried late in the little chamber, where she was wont to give him audience. She seemed more wishful to protract his stay than heretofore.

"Now for the ballad of Sir Bertine, the famous Lancashire knight, who was killed at St. Alban's, fighting for the glorious red rose of Lancaster."

Nothing loth, he commenced the following ditty:—

" The brave Sir Bertine Entwisel
Hath donn'd his coat of steel,
And left his hall and stately home,
To fight for Englond's weal.

" To fight for Englond's weal, I trow,
And good King Harry's right;
His loyal heart was warm and true,
His sword and buckler bright.

" That sword once felt the craven foe,
Its hilt was black with gore,
And many a mother's son did rue
His might at Agincourt.

" And now he stately steps his hall,
' A summons from the king?
My armour bright, my casque and plume,
My sword and buckler bring.

" ' Blow, warder, blow. Thy horn is shrill,
My liegemen hither call,
For I must away to the south countrie,
And spears and lances all.'

" ' Oh, go not to the south countrie!'
His lady weeping said;
' Oh, go not to the battle-field,
For I dream'd of the waters red!'

" ' Oh, go not to the south countrie!'
Cried out his daughter dear;
' Oh, go not to the bloody fight,
For I dream'd of the waters clear!'

" Sir Bertine raised his dark visor,
And he kiss'd his fond lady;
' I must away to the wars and fight
For our king in jeopardy!'

" The lady gat her to the tower,
She clomb the battlement;
She watch'd and greet, while through the woods
The glittering falchions went.

" The wind was high, the storm grew loud,
Fierce rose the billowy sea;
When from Sir Bertine's lordly tower
The bell boom'd heavily!

" ' O mother dear, what bodes that speech
From yonder iron tongue?'
' 'T is but the rude, rude blast, my love,
That idle bell hath swung.'

" Upon the rattling casement still
The beating rain fell fast;
When creeping fingers wandering thrice,
Across that window pass'd.

" ' O mother dear, what means that sound
Upon the lattice nigh?'
' 'T is but the cold, cold arrowy sleet
That hurtles in the sky.'

" The blast was still,—a pause more dread
Ne'er terror felt,—when, lo!
An armed footstep on the stair
Clank'd heavily and slow.

" Up flew the latch and tirling pin,
Wide swung the grated door,
Then came a solemn, stately tread
Upon the quaking floor!

" A shudder through the building ran,
A chill and icy blast;
A moan, as though in agony
Some viewless spirit pass'd!

" ' O mother dear, my heart is froze,
My limbs are stark and cold,'
Her mother spake not, for again
That turret bell hath tolled.

" Three days passed by. At eventide
There came an aged man,
He bent him low before the dame,
His wrinkled cheek was wan.

" ' Now, speak, thou evil messenger,
Thy tidings show to me.'
That aged man, nor look vouchsafed,
Nor ever a word spake he.

" ' What bringest thou ?' the lady said,
' I charge thee by the rood :'
He drew a signet from his hand,
'T was speckled o'er with blood.

" ' Thy husband's grave is wide and deep.
In St. Alban's priory
His body lies, but on his soul
Christ Jesu have mercy ! ' " *

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* In the parish church of St. Chad, Rochdale, is a marble tablet, erected by John Entwisle, Esquire, a descendant of Sir Bertine, on which is the following inscription :—

" To perpetuate a memorial in the church of St. Alban's (perished by time), this marble is here placed to the memory of a gallant and loyal man, Sir Bertine Entwisel, Knight, Viscount and Baron of Brybeke, in Normandy, and some time Bailiff of Constantin, in which office he succeeded his father-in-law, Sir John Ashton, whose daughter Lucy first married Sir Richard le Byron, an ancestor of the Lord Byrons, Barons of Rochdale, and, secondly, Sir Bertine Entwisel, who, after performing repeated acts of valour in the service of his sovereigns, Henry V. and VI., more particularly at Argincourt, was

Scarcely had the last solemn supplication been uttered, when the latch of the chamber was raised. The door flew open, and the outlaw, in his dark grey cap and cloak, stood before them. Constance was too much alarmed to utter a word. She clung to her companion with the agony of one grasping at the most fragile support for life and safety.

"Nay, maiden, I would not harm thee," said the intruder, in a voice so musical and sad, that it seemed to drop into the listener's ear like a gush of harmony, or a sweet and melancholy chime, wakening up the heart's most endeared and hallowed associations. His features were nobly formed. His eye, large and bright, of the purest grey; the lashes, like a cloud, covering and tempering their lustre. A touch of sadness rested on his lips. They seemed to speak of suffering and endurance, as if the soul's deepest agony would not have cast a word across their barriers. Constance, for a moment, raised her eyes, but they were suddenly withdrawn, overflowing with some powerful emotion. He still gazed: but one proud effort broke the fixed intensity of his glance, and his tongue resumed its office.

"Maiden, I am pursued. The foe are on my track. My retreat is discovered, and unless thou wilt vouchsafe to me a hiding-place, I am in their power. The Earl of

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killed in the first battle of St. Alban's, and on his tomb was recorded in brass the following inscription:—

"'Here lyth Syr Bertine Entwisel, Knighte, which was born in Lancastershyre, and was Viscount and Baron of Brybeke in Normandy, and Bailiff of Constantin, who died fighting on King Henry VI. party, 28th May, 1455.

'*On whose sowl Jesu have mercy!*'"

Tyrone—nay, I scorn the title—'t is the King of Ulster that stands before thee. I would not crouch thus for my own life, were it not for my country. Her stay, her sustenance is in thy keeping."

Never did wretchedness and misfortune sue in vain to woman's ear. Constance forgot her weakness and timidity. She saw not her own danger. A fellow-being craved help and succour,—all other feelings gave place, and she seemed animated with a new impulse. She looked on the minstrel, as if to ascertain his fidelity. It was evident, however, that no apprehension need be entertained, this personage seeming to manifest no slight solicitude for the safety of the unfortunate chief.

"The old lead mine, in the Cleugh," whispered he.

"Nay, it must be in the house," replied Constance, with a glance of forethought beyond her years. "The pursuers will not search this loyal house for treason!"

As was the case in most mansions belonging to families of rank and importance, a room was contrived for purposes of special concealment, where persons or property could be stowed in case of danger. A heavy stack of chimneys was enlarged, so as to admit of a small apartment, inconvenient enough in other respects, yet well adapted as a temporary hiding-place.

Hither, through secluded passages, the careful Constance conducted her guest, who had so strangely thrown himself, with unhesitating confidence, upon her generosity and protection. The proud representative of a kingly race was rescued by a woman, from ignominy and death. Some feeling of this nature probably overpowered him. As he bade her good night, his voice faltered, and he passed his hand suddenly athwart his brow. Constance,

having fulfilled this sacred duty, shrank from any further intercourse, and hastened to her chamber. It was long ere she could sleep; portentous dreams then brooded over her slumbers. The terrible vision was repeated, and she awoke, but not to her wonted cheerfulness.

How strange, how mysterious the mechanism of the human heart! The feelings glide insensibly into each other, changing their hue and character imperceptibly, as the colours on the evening cloud. Protection awakens kindness, kindness pity, and pity love. Love, the more dangerous, too, the process being unperceived, insidiously disguised under other names, and under the finest sympathies and affections of our nature."

With a step, light and noiseless as that of her favourite spaniel, who crept behind her, did Constance make an early visit to ascertain the safety of her prisoner. His retreat was unmolested. The pursuit was, for the present, evaded, and his enemies thrown out in their track. It was needful, however, that he should remain for a few days in his present concealment, prior to the attempt by which he purposed to regain his native country.

Constance loved the moonlight. The broad glare of day is so garish and extravagant. Besides, there is a restlessness and a buz, no human being, at least no sensible human being, can endure. Every thing is on the stir. Every creature, however paltry and insignificant, whether moth, mote, or atom, seems busy. Whereas, one serene soft gaze of the moon, appears to allay Nature's universal disquiet. The calm and mellow placidity of her look, so heavenly and undisturbed, lulls the soul, and subdues its operations to her influence.

Constance, we may suppose, accidentally, wandered by the end of the building, where, in the huge buttress of chimneys, a narrow crevice admitted light into the chamber occupied by the fugitive. At times, perhaps unconsciously, her eye wandered from the moon to this dreary abode; where it lingered longest, is more than we dare tell. She drew nigh to the dark margin of the pond. The white swans were sleeping in the sedge. At her approach, they fluttered clumsily to their element; there, the symbols of elegance and grace, like wreaths of sea-foam on its service, they glided on, apparently without an impulse or an effort. She was gazing on them, when a rustle amongst the willows on her left, arrested her attention. Soon the mysterious and almost omnipresent form of Tyrone stood before her.

"I must away, maiden!—Constance!" His voice was mournful as the last faint sound of the evening bell upon the waters.

"Why art thou here?" She said this in a tone of mingled anxiety and surprise.

"Here? Too long have I lingered in these woods, and around thy dwelling, Constance. But I must begone —for ever!"

"For ever?" cried the perplexed girl, forgetful of all but the dread thought of that for ever!

"Ay, for ever! Why should I stay?"

This question, alas! she could not answer; but stood gazing on the dark water, and on the silver waves, which the bright swans had rippled over the pool. Though she saw them not, yet the scene mingled itself insensibly with the feelings then swelling in her bosom; and these recur-

rent circumstances, in subsequent periods of her existence, never failed to bring the same dark tide of thought over the soul, with vivid and agonising distinctness.

"Maiden, beware!"

Constance turned towards him:—the moonlight fell on his brow: the dark curls swept nobly out from their broad shadows, twining luxuriantly about his cheek. His eyes were fixed on her, with an eagerness and an anguish in their expression the most absorbing and intense.

"I have loved thee.—Ay, if it be love to live whole nights on the memory of a glance,—on a smile,—on the indelible impress of thy form. Here,—here! But no living thing that I have loved;—no being that e'er looked on me with kindliness and favour, that has not been marked out for destruction. Oh, that those eyes had ne'er looked upon me!—Thou wert happy, and I have lingered on thy footstep till I have dragged thee to the same gulf where all hope—all joy that e'er stole in upon my dark path, must perish."

"Oh! do not foretaste thy misery thus," cried Constance. "The cruel sufferings thou hast undergone make thee apprehensive of evil. But how can *thy* fate control my destiny?"

"How, I know not," said Tyrone, "save that it shall bring the same clouds, in unmitigated darkness, about thy path. Dost thou love me?—Nay, start not. Stay not!" cried he, making way for the maiden to pass. But Constance seemed unable to move,—terrified and speechless.

"Perchance, thou knowest it not, but thou wouldst love me as a woman loves;—ay, beyond even the verge and extremity of hope! Even now the poison rankles in thy

bosom. Hark!—'t is the doom yon glorious intelligences denounced from that glittering vault, when they proclaimed my birth!"

He repeated the prediction as aforetime, with a deep, solemn intonation:—the maiden's blood seemed to curdle with horror. A pause of bewildering and mysterious terror followed. One brief minute in the lapse of time,—but an age in the records of thought! Constance, fearful of looking on the dark billows of the spirit, sought to avert her glance.

"Thou art an exile, and misfortune prompted me to thy succour:—thou hast won my pity, stranger."

"Beshrew me, 't is a wary and subtle deceiver, this same casuist, love. Believe him not!" said he, in a burst and agony of soul that made Constance tremble. "He would lead thee veiled to the very brink of the precipice, then snatch the shelter from thine eyes, and bid thee leap! Nay, 't is not pride,—'t is the doom, the curse of my birthright that is upon me. Maiden! I will but strike to thine heart, and then—poor soul!"—He shuddered; his voice grew tremulous and convulsed. "The stricken one shall fall.—Hark! the hounds are again upon my track!" The well-practised ear of the hunted fugitive could discern the approach of footsteps long before they were audible to an ordinary listener:—his eye and ear seemed on the stretch;—his head bent forward in the same direction;—he breathed not. Even Constance seemed to suspend the current of her own thoughts at this interruption.

"They are approaching. In all likelihood 't is a posse from the sheriff." Again he listened. "They are armed. Nay, then, Tyrone thou must to cover: thou canst not

flee. Point not to the hiding-place I have left. If, as I suspect, they bring a warrant of search, thy father's life may be in jeopardy."

"Where,—oh, where?" said Constance, forgetful of all consequences, in her anxiety for her father's fate and that of the illustrious stranger.

"In thy chamber, lady."

She drew back in dismay.

"Nay," continued he, guessing at the cause of her alarm, "they will not care to scrutinise for me there with much exactness; and, by the faith of my fathers, I will not wrong thee!"

There was a frankness, an open and undisguised freedom of manner in this address, which assured her. Her confidence returned, and she committed herself promptly to the issue. She felt her soul expand with the desire of contributing to his ultimate escape. All the ardour of her nature was concentrated in this generous and self-devoted feeling. Too innocent for suspicion, she seemed to rise above its influence.

Silently, and with due caution, she led the unfortunate Earl to her own chamber, where, in a recess opening through the bed's head into the arras, he seemed secure from discovery.

Scarcely was this arrangement completed, ere a thundering knock announced the visitor. It was an officer of justice, attended by some half dozen followers, who watched every avenue to the house whilst his message was delivered within.

This official delivered into the hands of Holt a warrant for the apprehension of O'Neale, Earl of Tyrone, a traitor, then suspected of being harboured in the mansion of

Grislehurst, whom the occupier was commanded, on pain of being treated as an accomplice, to deliver into the hands of justice, for the due administering of those pains and penalties which were attached to his crime.

The loyal owner, fired with indignation at this foul charge, rebutted the accusation with contempt:

"However loth," said the messenger, "I must execute mine office; and, seeing this first mission hath failed in its purpose, I have here a warrant of search. Mine orders are imperative."

"I tell thee I have no plotters lurking here. Search and welcome;—but if thou findest aught in this house that smells of treason, the Queen may blot out my escutcheon. I'll dismount the *pheon*. The arrow-head shall return to its quiver. 'T was honestly won, and, by our Lady's grace, it shall be honestly worn!"

"We must obey," said the officer:—"it shall be done with all courtesy and dispatch."

Holt bit his lips with rage and vexation. From the suspicion of harbouring and aiding the traitor Tyrone, his known loyalty and good faith should have protected him. He hoped, however, to throw back on the author of this foul slander the disgrace attached to it. Smothering his wrath, and brooding over its gratification, he accompanied the messenger, who, placing an additional guard at the main entrance, proceeded with a wary eye to the search. He carefully scrutinised the shape of the rooms, striking the walls and wainscots, measuring the capacity of the chambers, that no space might be left unaccounted for either in one way or another. The concealed apartment in the chimney-range did not escape his examination. Closets, cupboards, folding-doors,—even the family

pictures were turned aside, lest some stratagem should lurk behind.

Holt, with a look of malicious satisfaction, beheld every fresh disappointment, which he followed with undisguised expressions of ill-will.

"Now for the women's apartments," said the officer.

"I have but one daughter:—Do'st fancy that treason may be stitched in her petticoat?—Thinkest thou she would hide this invisible gallant in her bedchamber? 'Sdeath, that it should ha' come to this!—But I'll have my revenge."

"I would fain spare thee from this contumely,—but——"

"But what?"

"I must search the house through; and though I doubt not now that our information is false, yet I may not disobey the mandate I have received."

"Is this thy courtesy?"

"My courtesy must yet consist with the true and honest discharge of mine office—I wait not further parley."

A short gallery communicated from the stairhead to the private chamber of Constance. They met her outside the door; and the timid girl grew pale, as she beheld the official led on by her father.

"Constance," cried he, "thy chamber smacks of treason: it must be purged from this suspicion. This mousing owl will search the crannies even of a woman's wits ere he sate his appetite for discovery. Hast' aught plotting in the hem of thy purfle, or in thy holiday ruff and fardingale? Come with us, wench:—the gallant Earl of Tyrone would sport himself bravely in thy bedchamber, pretty innocent!"

"If my gallantry were akin to mine office,—then, lady, would I spare thy bosom and mine own nature this extremity. Believe me, thou shalt suffer no rudeness at my hands."

The officer bowed low, observing her confusion and distress.

"Go with us," said her father, "and leave not until our search is over. Mayhap he may find a lover in thy shoe, or in the wrinkles of thy rose-tie." He entered the chamber as he said this. It was a little room, tricked out with great elegance and beauty. Indian cabinets were there, and other costly ornaments, inlaid with ivory and pearl, in the arrangement of which, and of the other furniture, considerable taste was displayed. A lute lay in one corner;—tambour-work and embroidery occupied a recess near the window;—the clothes' presses shewed their contents neatly folded, and carefully set out to the best advantage.

"I' faith, wench, thy chamber seems well fitted for so goodly a brace of guests—not a thread awry. Every thing in trim order for thy gallants, mayhap. Thou hast not been at thy studies of late. I have seen its interior in somewhat less orderly fashion. I marvel if it might not be pranked out for our coming. Now, to work, Sir:—where does thy grubbing begin?"

Constance posted herself in a gloomy corner, where she could watch their proceedings almost unperceived. She hoped that in her chamber the search would not be so strict as in situations of more likelihood and probability for concealment. At any rate, the common feelings of delicacy and respect,—not quite extinct, she observed, even in this purveyor of justice,—would prevent any very exact and dangerous scrutiny. Nor was she deceived. He

merely felt round the walls, opened the presses and closets, but did not disturb the bed-furniture. He was retiring from the search, when her father scornfully taunted him with the ill success of his mission.

"I wonder thou hast not tumbled the bed topsy-turvy. I am glad to see thou hast yet some grace and manners in thy vocation. Now, Sir Messenger, to requite thee for this thy courtesy and forbearance, I will shew thee a secret tabernacle, which all thy prying has not been able to discover."

Saying this, he approached the bed: a spring was concealed in one of the posts communicating with the secret door behind which Tyrone was hidden. As he turned aside the drapery to ascertain precisely its situation, Constance, no longer able to control her apprehension of discovery, rushed before him. Her terror, for the time, threw her completely from her guard.

"Do not, my father:—he must not look there. For my sake, oh! spare *this*——"

She was silent:—her lips grew deadly pale; and she leaned against the pillar for support. The officer's suspicions were awakened, and he gave a shrewd guess at the truth.

"Now, fair dame," he cried: "it is but an ungracious office to thwart a lady of her will, but I must see what lurks in that same secret recess. Master Holt, I pr'ythee help me to a peep behind the curtain."

But Holt was too much astonished to comply. What could exist there, to excite his daughter's apprehensions so powerfully, puzzled him greatly. He had not a thought, the most remote, that could affect her fidelity;—yet he hesitated. The officer now, in a more peremptory tone,

demanded admission. Rousing from his stupor, and mortified at the folly of these girlish fancies, he struck the spring: in a trice, a portion of the bed's head flew open, displaying a dark chasm beyond. Swift as thought, the officer darted through the aperture; but the door was immediately shut, and with great violence. A scuffle was heard within, but not a word was spoken. Holt, in doubt and consternation, gazed with a wild and terrific aspect on the devoted Constance, who, covering her face, sought to avoid seeing the expected result of her imprudence. Her father now listened. There was a dread suspense in his look, more fearful than even the most violent outburst of his wrath. He seemed every moment to expect some irrefragable proof,—some visible and overwhelming conviction of his daughter's infamy. The door was still closed. Groans were plainly audible, telling of some terrible strife within. Suddenly these indications ceased. Holt shuddered. He fancied some foul act was perpetrating—perhaps even now consummated—under his own roof; and swift would be the vengeance required at his hands. Constance, too, seemed to apprehend the commission of some deadly crime, as she threw herself imploringly before her father.

"Save them,—oh, save them!—their strife is mortal!"

He shook her from him with a glance of abhorrence, and the maiden fell heavily on the floor. He was preparing to enter, when the door flew open, and a form rushed through in the gaudy apparel of the officer. He leaped on the floor, and, ere Holt could utter a word, he heard him descending the stairs with great precipitation.

"Whom hast thou concealed in thy bedchamber?" enquired the almost frantic father. Constance sat on the

ground, her head resting on the chair beside which she had fallen. She wept not; but her heart was full, even to bursting.

"What is the name of thy paramour?—Thou hast been somewhat eager, methinks, to accomplish thine own and a father's disgrace!"

This cutting address roused her. She replied, but in a firm tone,—

"A stranger,—an exile. Misfortune appeals not to woman's heart unalleviated. He threw himself on my protection; and where the feelings own no taint, their purity is not sullied,—even in a lady's bedchamber!"

A glance of insulted pride passed over her beautifully-formed features. It was but for a moment. The agony of her spirit soon drank up the slender rill, her feelings had gushed forth; and she stood, withered and drooping before the angry frown of her father.

"Surely, 't is not the rebel Tyrone that my daughter harbours in the privacy of her chamber? Speak!—Nay, then hast thou indeed brought an old man's grey hairs to the grave in sorrow! Treason!—Oh, that I have lived for this,—and my own flesh and blood hath done it. Out of my sight, unnatural monster. Dare not to crawl again across my path, lest I kill thee!"

"Oh! my father, I am indeed innocent." She again threw herself at his feet, but he spurned her from him as though he loathed her beyond endurance. Boiling, and maddened with rage at the presumption of this daring rebel, Holt, forgetful of his own danger, seized the light. He burst open the secret door; but what was his astonishment on beholding, not the hated form of Tyrone, but the officer of justice himself, gagged, pinioned, and deprived

of his outer dress. The cap and mantle of Tyrone, by his side, told too plainly of the daring and dangerous exploit by which his escape had been effected.

The outlaw, soon after his enlargement, finding that the cause he had espoused was hopeless, and that matters were at the last extremity in his own fate, and that of his unhappy country,—fearful, too, of drawing the innocent Constance and her father into the deep vortex of his own ruin,—made all haste to the capital, where, through the powerful interest excited in his behalf, aided by his well-known valour, and the influence he was known to possess amongst his countrymen, he received a free pardon from the Queen.

Yet his thoughts lingered on the remembrance of her to whose heroic and confiding spirit he owed his safety. Never had his proud bosom been so enthralled. Though nurtured in camps, amid the din of arms and the shout of the battle, yet his knowledge of the female heart was almost intuitive. He had loved more than once, but in every case the attachment ended unhappily, terminating either by the death of the object, or by some calamity his own evil fate had unavoidably brought upon its victim. Though fearful the same operation of his destiny would ensue, and that misery and misfortune would still follow the current of his affections, yet he resolved to behold once more the maiden he loved, with an ardour almost surpassing his own belief.

One cold dull morning, towards the wane of the year, when the heavy drops lay long on the rank herbage; no sunbeam yet loitering through the damp chill atmosphere, but the sky one wide and unvarying expanse—a sea of cloud:—here and there a black scud passing over, like a

dim bark sweeping across the bosom of that "waveless deep," a stranger stood by a low wicket near the mansion of Grislehurst. He looked wistfully at the gloomy windows, unlighted by a single reflection from without; like the rayless night of his own soul:—they were mostly closed. A mysterious and unusual stillness prevailed. The brown leaves fluttered about,—unswept from the dreary avenues. Decayed branches obstructed the paths; and every object wore a look of wretchedness and dilapidation. The only sign of occupancy and life was one grey wreath of smoke, curling heavily from its vent, as if oppressed with the gloom by which it was surrounded. The melancholy note of the redbreast was the only living sound, as the bird came hopping towards him with its usual air of familiarity and respect.

Enveloped in a military cloak, and in his cap a dark feather drooping gently over his proud features, the stranger slowly approached the house: a side-door stood partly open. He entered. A narrow passage led into the hall. No embers brightened the huge chimney.—The table shewed no relics of the feast,—no tokens of the past night's revel. The deer's antlers still hung over the master's place at the board, but the oaken chair was gone. Dust and desertion had played strange antics in these "high places." The busy spider had wreathed her dingy festoons in mockery over the pomp she degraded.

He listened, but there was no sound, save the last faint echo of his footstep. Turning towards the staircase, a beautiful spaniel, a sort of privileged favourite of Constance, came, with a deep growl, as if to warn away the intruder. But the sagacious animal suddenly fawned

upon him, and with a low whine ascended the stairs, looking back wistfully, as though inviting him to follow.

Scarcely knowing why, or bestowing one thought on the nature of his intrusion, he ascended. The place seemed familiar to him. He entered a narrow gallery, where he paused, overcome by some sudden and overwhelming emotion. The dog stood, too, looking back with a low and sorrowful whine. With a sudden effort he grappled with and shook off the dark spirit that threatened to overpower him. A low murmur was heard, apparently from a chamber at no great distance. Without reflecting a moment on the impropriety of his situation, he hastily approached the door. His guide, with a look of almost irresistible persuasion, implored him to enter.

It was the chamber of Constance. A female was kneeling by the bed, too much absorbed to be conscious of his approach: she was in the attitude of prayer. He recognised the old nurse,—her eye glistening in the fervour of devotion, whilst pouring forth to her FATHER in secret, the agony of soul that words are too feeble to express.

Bending over the bed, as if for the support of some frail victim of disease, he beheld the lord of the manion. His look was wild and haggard;—no moisture floated over his eyeballs: they were glazed and motionless; arid as the hot desert,—no refreshing rain dropped from their burning orbs, dimmed with the shadows of despair.

Stretched on the bed, her pale cheek resting on the bosom of her father, lay the yet beauteous form of Constance Holt. A hectic flush at times passed across her features. Her lip, shrunk and parched with the fever that consumed her, was moistened by an attendant with unremitting and unwearied assiduity;—her eye often rose in

tenderness on her parent, as if anxious to impart to him the consolation she enjoyed.

"Oh, I am happy, my father!" Here a sudden change was visible,—some chord of sorrow was touched, and it vibrated to her soul.

Her father spoke not.

"I *have* loved!—Oh, faithfully. But, now—let me die without a murmur to Thee, or one wish but Thy will, and I am happy!" She raised her soft and streaming eyes towards the throne of that Mercy she addressed. The cloud passed, but she sunk back on her pillow, exhausted with the conflict.

Her father bent over her in silent terror, anticipating the last struggle. Suddenly he exclaimed, as if to call back the yet lingering spirit,—

"Live, my Constance! Could I save thee, thou blighted bud—blighted by my——" His lip grew pale; he struck his forehead, and a groan like the last expiring throe of nature escaped him.

"Would the destroyer of my peace were here!—'T is too late—or I would not now forbid thy love. But he was a traitor, a rebel—else——"

Constance gradually revived from her insensibility. A sudden flash from the departing spirit seemed to have animated her—a new and vehement energy, which contrasted strangely with her weak and debilitated frame.

"I have seen him," she cried. "Oh, methought his form passed before me;—but it is gone!" She looked eagerly round the apartment; other eyes involuntarily followed—but no living object could be distinguished through the chill and oppressive gloom that brooded over that chamber of death.

"It was a vision—a shadowy messenger from the tomb. Yet, once more if I might see him—ere I die." A deep sob, succeeded by a rapid gush of tears, relieved her; but it told of the powerful and all-pervading passion not yet extinguished in her breast.

"We shall meet!" Again she raised her eyes towards that throne to which the sigh of the sufferer never ascended in vain.

"Yes, my own—my loved Constance, now!" cried the stranger, rushing from his concealment. He clasped her in his arms. A gleam, like sun-light across the wave, shot athwart the shadow that was gathering on her eye. It seemed the forerunner of a change. The anxious father forebore to speak, but he looked on his daughter with an agony that seemed to threaten either reason or existence. Constance gazed on her lover, but her eye gradually became more dim. Her hand relaxed in his grasp;—yet her features wore a look of serenity and happiness.

"Oh, most merciful Father! thou hast heard my prayer, through Him whose merits have found me a place in that glory to which I come. Be merciful to him whose love is true as mine own, and faithful unto death. Tyrone, we meet again!—Oh, how have I prayed for thee!" Her eyes seemed to brighten even in this world with the glories of another.

"Farewell!—I hear the hymns of yon ransomed ones around the throne. They beckon my spirit from these dark places of sorrow. Now—farewell!"

She cast one look towards her lover: it was the last glimpse of earth. The next moment her gaze was on the

brightness of that world, whence sorrow and sighing flee away. So sudden was the transition, that the first smile of the disembodied spirit seemed to linger on the abode she had left, like the evening cloud, reflecting the glories of another sky, ere it fades for ever into the darkness and solitude of night.

HOGHTON TOWER.

" Pastime with good company
I love, and shall until I die;
Grudge so will, but none deny;
So God be pleased, so live will I.
For my pastance,
Hunt, sing, and dance,
My heart is set;
All godly sport,
To my comfort,
Who shall me let?"

THE KINGE'S BALADE.

" God gives not kings the stile of gods in vain,
For on his throne his sceptre do they sway;
And, as their subjects ought them to obey,
So kings should feare and serve their God againe."

KING JAMES TO HIS SON PRINCE HENRY.

Drawn by A. Pickering.

Engraved by F. & A. Tinden.

HEIGHTON TOWER.

London, Published by Longman & Co. 1822.

HOGHTON TOWER.

"The ancient castle denominated Hoghton Tower stands on the summit of a hill, formerly shrouded with trees, four miles and a half west of Blackburn. It was erected by Sir Thomas Hoghton, in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign. It remained for several generations the principal seat of the Hoghton family; and after part of it had been blown up by accident, when garrisoned for Charles the First, the injury was repaired. The family have now removed to Walton Hall: and Hoghton Tower is left to decay, two poor families inhabiting the south wing only. A ponderous gateway, immediately under the centre tower, leads to the quadrangular court-yard, capable of holding six hundred men. The noble embattled tower, forming the west front, with its two minor square towers, serve as appendages to the north and south wing, and are united by low walls. Within the court-yard, a noble flight of steps leads to the middle quadripartite, similar in aspect to Stonyhurst College, the ancient residence of the Sherbornes. This middle pile contains large staircases, branching out to long galleries, into which the several chambers open. One chamber, still called James the First's room, is considered 'most worthy of notice;' it

has two square windows in, both north and south, is beautifully wainscoted, and contains some old furniture. A fine prospect is gained from this ancient and sequestered abode; the pretty village of Walton-le-dale, delightfully situate in a valley, the improving town of Preston, and the single-coned Nase Point presenting itself majestically in the distance. The gentle river Darwen pursues its placid course among the enclosures at the base of the hill."

The above description, extracted from "Nichols's Royal Progresses of James the First," and likewise the particulars scattered through the following tale, will, we hope, convey to the reader a pretty accurate idea of this noble but deserted mansion.

A petition, which was presented here (some say at Myerscough) to King James, by a great number of Lancashire peasants, tradesmen, and servants, requesting that they might be allowed to take their diversions (as of old accustomed) after divine service on Sundays, is said to have been the origin of the "Book of Sports," soon after promulgated by royal authority. James being persuaded those were Puritans who forbade such diversions, and that they were Jewishly inclined, because they affected to call Sunday the Sabbath, recommended that diverting exercises should be used after evening prayer, and ordered the book to be read publicly in all churches; and such ministers as refused to obey the injunction, were threatened with severe punishment in the High Commission Court. This legal violation of the day which is unequivocally the Christian Sabbath, roused at the time the indignation of the seriously disposed, and has been frequently reprobated by historians. Foremost of its opposers, and eminent in example, stands the virtuous and firm

Archbishop Abbot, who, being at Croydon the day it was ordered to be read in churches, flatly forbade it to be read there; "which the King was pleased to wink at, notwithstanding the daily endeavours that were used to irritate the King against him." The "Book of Sports" is not, however, without its apologists among modern writers. The following are Mr. D'Israeli's remarks on the subject:—"The King found the people in Lancashire discontented, from the unusual deprivation of their popular recreations on Sundays and holidays, after the church service: 'With our own ears we heard the general complaint of our people.' The Catholic priests were busily insinuating among the lower orders, that the Reformed Religion was a sullen deprivation of all mirth and social amusements, and thus 'turning the people's hearts.' But, while they were denied what the King terms 'lawful recreations' (which are enumerated to consist of dancing, archery, leaping, vaulting, May-games, Whitsun-ales, morris-dances, and the setting up of May-poles, and other manly sports), they had substituted some vicious ones. Alehouses were more frequented, drunkenness more general, tale-mongery and sedition, the vices of sedentary idleness, prevailed, while a fanatical gloom was spreading over the country. The King, whose gaiety of temper instantly sympathised with the multitude, being perhaps alarmed at this new shape which Puritanism was assuming, published 'The Book of Sports,' which soon obtained the contemptuous name of 'The Dancing Book.'" Life of James, p. 135. In reply to this view of the subject, we shall, for the present, conclude with Dr. Whitaker's remark, that "The King was little aware of the effects which the ill-judged licence was likely to produce on the

common people. The relics of it are hardly worn out to this day; and there is scarcely a Sunday evening in any village of the county of Lancaster which does not exhibit symptoms of obedience to the injunction of honest 'recreation.'"—*Royal Progresses of James I.*

HOGHTON TOWER.

On the 15th of August, in the year 1617, a day memorable for its heat and brightness, and for the more enduring glory shed over this remote corner of our rejoicing and gladdened realm, came forth King James, from the southern gate of his loyal borough of Preston, in a gilded and unwieldy caroche, something abated of its lustre by reason of long service and the many vicissitudes attending his majesty's "Progresses," which he underwent to the great comfort and well-being of his dominions.

It were needless to set forth the mighty state in which this war-hating monarch, this "vicegerent of Divinity," departed—or the great terror and agitation of Mr. Breares, the lawyer, when he made a marvellous proper speech at the town-cross—wiping his forehead thrice, and his mouth barely once. Nor shall we dilate upon the distress, and dazzling silk doublets of the mayor and aldermen of this proud and thrice-happy borough—nor how they knelt to the soft salute of his majesty's hand. Our whole book were a space too brief, and a region too inglorious for the wide pomp and paraphernalia of the time; and how the bailiff rode, and the mace-bearer guarded the caroche, it were presumption, an offensive compound of ignorance and pride, to attempt the portraiture. Suffice it to say, they

wore mulberry-coloured taffeta gowns, carried white staves and foot-cloths, and were preceded by twenty-four stout yeomen riding before the king, with fringed javelins, unto a place beyond Walton, where they departed. Our object is to notice matters of less magnitude and splendour; occurrences then too trivial to guide the pen of the chronicler, lost beneath the blaze and effulgence that followed on the track of this pageant-loving king. Scraps, which the pomps and vanities of those days would have degraded, we thus snatch from oblivion; a preservation more worthy, and an occupation more useful, we hope, than to hand down to admiring ages the colour and cut of taffeta or brocade.

This "wisest," of earthly kings was an ill-spoiled compound of qualities, the types of which existed in his monitor and his preceptor; two great men, whom history has not failed to distinguish—Archie Armstrong and George Buchanan—the wit and the scholar, which in him became the representatives of two much more useful and esteemed qualities—fool and pedant!

Attended by his favourite Buckingham and a numerous train of officials, he "progressed" upon the road to Hoghton Tower, the spacious and splendid dwelling of Sir Richard Hoghton, the first baronet of that family, whose guest he was to continue for a space, to the great envy and admiration of the whole neighbourhood.

As they came nigh the Tower, nothing could be conceived more beautiful or picturesque. Its embattled gateway, bartizans, and battlements, crowning the summit of a bold and commanding eminence, became brightly illuminated, flashing against grim and shapeless masses of

cloud, the shattered relics of a storm, that was rolling away in the distance.

Many of the neighbouring gentry were in attendance, not disdaining to wear, out of grace and courtesy to Sir Richard Hoghton, the livery of their thrice-honoured entertainer.

The king's train alone were very numerous, amongst whom appeared Lord Zouch, Constable of Dover Castle, and Sir George Goring, Lieutenant of the Gentlemen Pensioners.* With the latter rode Sir John Finett,† Assistant Master of the Ceremonies, but who acted the chief part in this important office during the king's jour-

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* "Sir George Goring, of Hurst Pierrepoint, in Sussex, representative of a junior line of the respectable family of Goring, which maintains its importance in that county, was bred at Court, under the care of his father, one of Elizabeth's Gentlemen Pensioners; was knighted May 29, 1608; in 1610 occurs as Gentleman in Ordinary of the Bedchamber to Prince Henry; and now accompanied the King to Scotland as Lieutenant of his Gentlemen Pensioners. He was recommended to James equally by his sagacity and a peculiar jocularity of humour, and became the King's familiar companion."—*Nichols's Royal Progresses*, vol. iii. p. 256.

† Sir John Finett, says Anthony à Wood (Fasti by Bliss, vol. i. col. 492), was son of Sir Robert Finett, of Soulton, near Dover, in Kent, son and heir of Sir Thomas, son and heir of John Finett, of Sienna, in Italy, (where his name is ancient), who came into England in quality of servant to Cardinal Campegius, and married a Maid of Honour to Queen Katharine. "Sir John was always bred in the Court, where, by his wit, innocent mirth, and great skill in composing songs, he pleased James the First very much. He was sent into France in 1614 about matters of public concern, and in the year after received the honour of knighthood at Whitehall; about which time (or rather about 1612) he was made assistant to the master of the ceremonies, with the reversion of that place."—*Nichols's Progresses*, vol. iii. p. 133.

ney; two worthies, of whom it might be said, that for tempering of the king's humour, and aptness in ministering to his delights, their like could scarcely have been found. Such nights of feasting and dancing, such days of hawking, hunting, and horse-racing, had never before gladdened the heart of "Merry Englonde," or England's monarchs. It seemed as if the whole realm were given up to idolatry and dissipation. The idol Pleasure was worshipped with such ardour and devotion, that all ranks were striving to outdo each other in tinsel, trumpery, and deeds of worthlessness and folly.

The King loved such disguises and representations as were witty and sudden; the more ridiculous, to him the more pleasant. This vain and frivolous humour might seem unworthy and unbecoming in so great a prince, whose profundity of wisdom had well entitled him to the appellation of "our English Solomon," did we not call to remembrance that the greatest of men have not disdained to be children in their sports; the deepest dispositions of the mind seeming to require the lightest and most frivolous recreations.

These worthy purveyors to the king's pleasure were of a temper and capacity widely different. Sir George Goring was caustic and severe; Sir John Finett pleasant and social, delighting in nothing so much as in the happiness and gratification of his friends. But the natural disposition of his thoughts was wild and melancholic, taking its hue from some early impression, that was now fading in doubt and disappointment.

The full burst of his hilarity floated joyously on the surface, and his loud mirth, blunting the keen edge of his own feelings, became the more exhilarating in proportion

to their acuteness. He had the warm blood of the Italian in his veins, being descended from an ancient family of Sienna; and his rich brown cheek and darkly-speaking eye belied not the land of his origin. Goring was fat and swarthy: his nose small and supercilious, and his eye gray and piercing. He cared not whom he wounded, provided the shafts he drew were well pointed; and his wit quick and well-aimed, causing the king to laugh, and his victim to writhe during their operation.

As the monarch sate discoursing with the Duke of Buckingham, being sore heated, he threw open the windows of his coach, from whence he occasionally obtruded his wise head for a survey, and a visit from some vagrant and silly breeze, if any were abroad. The roads admitted not of aught but the gentlest paces, and the great clamour and crowd about the procession made the dust and heat excessively annoying; whereupon the king, it is said, did apply a very uncourteous epithet to some of his loving subjects, who came too close upon his person, which, though not generally averse to being gazed at, was in too warm an atmosphere at present for enjoying these kingly exhibitions.

"O' my saul, that meikle stane would build a bra' chappin-block for my Lord Provost!" said royalty, its head again stationed at the window, surveying with solemn curiosity an egg-shaped stone of the boulder sort, which, sure enough, was of a remarkable bigness, though not of that rarity or infrequence that should have drawn forth the wonder of a king. His native dialect he generally employed on jocose and familiar subjects. In affairs of importance he affected the use of the English tongue, which he spoke with great formality and pomp.

"Stop," said he. "There be *literæ* or letters thereon. Unto what purport?"

But no one could resolve him as to the use of the stone, or the purport of the writing. His worthy host protested that the wonder had never before been observed. It was doubtless some miracle worked for the occasion.

"But the *scriptum* or writing will set forth the motive or argument thereto. The letters be goodly and well-shapen."

Many voices recited the inscription, forming the following ill-spelled line.

"Torne me o're, an I 'le tel thee plaine."

The well-known childish curiosity of the monarch would not permit him to go away unsatisfied. The day was hot, and the stone was heavy; but a long and laborious toil brought to light the following satisfactory intelligence:—

"Hot porritch softens hard butter-cakes,
So torne me o're again." *

"And o' my saul," said the king, "ye shall gang roun' to yere place again; for sa meikle as these country gowks mauna ken the riddle without the labour."

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* This stone, the author has been told, was in existence less than a century ago, though not in the precise situation above alluded to. He has heard the disappointment of the curious passers by, told with considerable humour; they, however, generally took care to replace the stone with its word of promise before the eye, that the next comer might bestow the same labour for the like result.

So the "muckle stane" was replaced for the next comer, who had strength and curiosity enough to unriddle the sphinx.

But James did not relish fooleries wherein he was the butt. Whether it was devised by some wicked rhymester and contemner of royalty in the neighbourhood, or placed there by some of the wits of his own company, was never ascertained, though he challenged them at random, and swore lustily that he would know the originator of this piece of folly and impertinence.

As the king drew nigh to the avenue, there presently issued forth a goodly flourish of trumpets, which made the women caper and the horses prance. Sir Richard Hoghton rode with the king; but his son, Sir Gilbert, met his majesty with a great retinue, clad mostly after the same fashion; many of the neighbouring gentry, as we have before observed, not disdaining to put on Sir Richard's gowns and liveries, to swell the pomp and magnificence of that memorable occasion.

The javelin-bearers rode two and two: halting at his majesty's approach, they formed an avenue,—through which Sir Gilbert, sumptuously attired, went forth to salute the king. His cloak and hose were all glistering and spangled with embroidery; his vest was cloth of gold, enriched with rare and costly stones; his shirt-bands and ruffles were worked in silver; and his gloves, Spanish, breathing out the choicest perfume; his hat was of French murrey, the brims thick set with gold-twist and spangles; round it was a band of goldsmith's work, looped with a crystal button.

On approaching the monarch, he gracefully alighted; whereupon, James commanded that the carriage should be

stayed, thrusting out his hand in a very gracious sort to this worthy knight, who, on his knees, received the blessing.

His majesty then took horse, assisted by Buckingham, who held the stirrup; but the king's peculiar and unsteady vaulting was much noticed. Many of the bystanders, not aware of his majesty's dislike to these equestrian feats, marvelled not a little at the motion of his leg, and the disturbed and uneasy position he assumed. The pathway up the avenue was laid with purple velvet, on which the glittering cavalcade, horse and foot, formed a noble pageant, whose pomp was almost dazzling to behold. The carriages took another path opened for the occasion. The whole area in front of the Tower teemed with multitudes, whose shouts and huzzas made the very hills and echoes loyal, while they rang with acclamations to their sovereign. Presently issued forth from the middle gateway two curiously-attired figures, bearing emblems to indicate their character and design. These were living allegories," represented by the house-steward and Hobbe Handycap, the forester or tienman, keeper of vert and venison, a "ryghte merrie knave," and one foremost in all pastimes and "honest recreations;" a great promoter and performer of May-games, morris-dancing, and the like. These figures were to be conceived as household gods, the tutelary deities of Hoghton. The first spokesman was clad in a purple taffeta mantle; in one hand was a palm-tree branch, on his head a garland of the like sort, and in the other hand he carried a dog.

King James, accustomed to, and expecting these mummeries, made a full stop, when, forthwith, began the purple mantle as follows:—

"This day, great Kinge, for government admired,
Which these thy subjects have so much desired,
Shall be kept holy in their heart's best treasure,
And vow'd to James, as is this month to Cæsar;"

With a good score of lines besides, of the like brevity and metre. In them, he was said to be greater even than the immortal gods themselves, seeing that they came to render their homage unto him, together with all things else over which they bare rule, even as the greater doth include the less.

Then spake Hobbe, the deity of the chase.

"Greatest of mortals!"

But he was presently nonplused, and the steward stept forth to his relief, reciting how that the glorious beams from his majesty's person had stricken dumb this weaker divinity. Having finished, the heat being intense, and they mightily encumbered with garments, did presently turn their backs on the king's majesty, making all speed towards the gateway for shelter. This breach of good manners was not unnoticed by the monarch, who said, wittily we suppose, for it was much applauded, that these gods were not of High Olympus, but of the nether sort, inasmuch as they had turned tail upon their subject.

James and his company, passing through the ponderous and embattled gateway, entered into the great quadrangle, an area, it is reported, of sufficient size to contain six hundred men. Here he alighted, and was conducted in great state to the oaken chamber, where, royalty being very hot, a tankard of Rhenish wine, mingled with rose-water, was handed to him. Of this he partook but sparingly, calling to Buckingham for a cup of muscadine and eggs.

Goring and Finett were not idle, but each of them fully employed in their respective vocations. Sir John had been pierced by a pair of dark eyes from the crowd upon the staircase, and Goring was making all haste for the royal hunt, his majesty having signified that he would on that same evening kill a stag. James was, generally, as quick to resolve as he was impotent to execute; vacillating, and without any fixed purpose, in matters that required decision and promptitude of action.

With his usual pusillanimity the king went through the business of the hunt; the deer being literally driven into the very teeth of the dogs. An hour having been thus occupied, he commanded that they should return, highly satisfied with his own skill and intrepidity. Ascending the hill with his favourite, Goring, and discoursing pleasantly on this noble pastime, the king turned round on the sudden as though recollecting something he had lost.

"What! Jack Finett. Quhere? quhere, I say, is my Sienna balsam?" said he, laying a deep emphasis on the guttural. This sally was acknowledged with delight by the courtiers. But "Jack" had not been seen or even remembered. Some trick or device was doubtless intended, and the king held himself in readiness for the expected surprise; but none was forthcoming. No magazine of mirth exploded; no mine was sprung; and James entered into his chamber without any visible expression of jocoseness issuing from the fertile brains of Sir John Finett. The irritation produced by his absence seemed to arise, not from any need of him, but from that tormenting desire which mortals universally feel for the possession of objects beyond their reach. Search was commanded for the truant, unsuccessfully; and supper was begun.

The eastern side of the hill on which the tower is built is bold and rugged, being steep and difficult of access. At its base the Darwen forces itself through a narrow channel, its waters tumbling over huge heaps of rock, and reeling in mazy eddies to the echo of their own voice. The river seems to have worked itself a passage through the chasm; and the boiling and noisy torrent, struggling to free itself from observation, foams and bellows like the gorge of a whirlpool, from whence originates its name, "The Orr," not unlike in sound to the effect that is here produced.

On the opposite shore the rock is nearly perpendicular, the dog-rose and the bramble hiding its crevices, and the crawling campanula wreathing its bright bells about the sterile front, from which its sustenance was derived, like youth clinging to the cold and insensate bosom of age. The declivity sloping abruptly from the tower was then covered with a wild and luxuriant underwood, stunted ash, and hazel twigs, thinly occupying a succession of ridges to the summit. Here and there a straggling oak threw its ungraceful outline over a narrow path, winding immediately under the base of the hill,—its bare roots undermined by oozings from above, and giving way to the slow but certain operation of the destroyer. From the heat and dryness of the season the torrent was much diminished, rushing into a succession of deep pools, which the full free light of heaven had scarcely ever visited. Now dimly seen through the hot gleams of a summer evening, they seem wavering in the lurid reflection from surrounding objects.

Up this narrow gorge had strayed Sir John Finett with a companion, too busily engaged, it might seem, in their

own converse to note the lapse of time, and the probable consequences of the king's displeasure.

"Fair lady," said the gay cavalier, "I am not more bold than my vocation holdeth meet. Your cousin, at Myerscough, was so liberal of his own suit, and my countenance therein, that he hath intrusted his love-billet to my keeping, warning me that I should let none but yourself be privy to its delivery."

"Would that my cousin had eschewed letter-writing! I am averse to his suit, and yet he ceaseth not to vex me continually with his drivelling ditties. His ballad-mongering to these 'eyne' alone would set up one of your court rhymesters for a twelvemonth."

"Yet may aversion cease, and your mislikings be not over difficult to assuage," said the courtier.

"I doubt not but Sir John Finett speaks of the capricious and changeable humours he hath witnessed:—our country fashion holdeth not so lightly by its affection or disfavour."

"Then there be, doubtless, of those stout vessels that shall never leak out a lady's favour. That this lot were mine!"

Sir John, perhaps unconsciously, threw his dark eyes full upon the lady, who blushed deeply; but the gloom concealed this outward show of feeling, too unformed and indefinite for thought. She spoke not; but the knight, under cover of his errand, continued the discourse without awakening her alarm. He excelled in that specious, though apparently heedless raillery, which is so apt to slip without suspicion into a lady's ear; and he could ply his suit, under this disguise, with such seeming artlessness and unconcern, that a lodgment in the citadel was

sometimes effected ere the garrison was aware of the intrusion.

This fair dame, Grace Gerard, was of gentle blood, a daughter of the Gerards of Ashton Hall, near Lancaster. At the earnest solicitations of the Hoghton family, she was induced to remain a guest with them during the royal visit. Of a sweet and excellent temper, her form and face were its very image and counterpart. The world was to her untried—fresh, fair, unblemished—she looked upon it as though she were newly alighted on "some heaven-kissing hill," from whence the whole round of life's journey was blent and mingled with the glowing beam that now encompassed her. Alas! that youth should so soon pluck and eat of "The Tree of Knowledge!" that a nearer approach should dissipate the illusion! that our path, as it winds through those scenes we have looked on from afar in the light of our imagination, should at every step discover the tracks of misery,—a world of wretchedness and of woe!

Sir John, with all his faults, inseparable it may be from the society into which he had been thrown, was not vicious. Loving and beloved, he existed but as the object of woman's regard. This foible he indulged not farther. But, many a bright eye waxed dim,—many a fond heart was withered, in the first spring-tide of its affection.

"Now that I have granted you this audience for my cousin's sake, and given him my reply, it is needful that we return. Besides, the night is coming on. The king and the feast demand your presence."

"Nay, thou cruel tyrant, tell me not of my chain. The king's humour I can control, but——"

"Presume not on the favour of princes; an ancient,

but wholesome caution," said the maiden, laughing at Sir John, who, for the first time, seemed to be aware of his duty, and was puzzling his brains for an excuse.

The bell now rung out lustily from the Tower, increasing the knight's perplexity. The innocent cause of this delay only laughed at his concern, singing, as though to herself,

"'The bell has been rung, and the mass hath been sung,
And the feast eat merrily,
Merrily!'

and the king's master of the ceremonies absent."

The aspect of affairs was now more serious than he had anticipated. Supper was indeed commencing. Some scheme or witty device must be hit upon,—speedily too, or the king's displeasure might be difficult to assuage.

"But for thy bright eyes and fair speech, my lady Grace, I had not been a missing from my duty." He looked thoughtful, and it was the maiden's turn to rally.

They ascended the hill by a short but steep path. As they approached the summit, he seemed to awake from a deep reverie.

"Now, have you granted me an audience for a lover's sake—to-morrow, let me be the ambassador for another."

"I have no lovers from whom I would care to be honoured with an embassy!"

"None?" said the knight peering curiously, as if he would penetrate the folds of a real Flander's scarf, she had thrown carelessly about her head—

"'Then will I be thy lover true,
And thou my beauteous queene'

through these gay festivities.—But mark me!"—He became serious on the sudden. The expression of his

eye, from its general character of assumed gaiety, was changed into that of tenderness and respect. Mark me, lady, I would be spared the horror of a rival. Will you be my partner in these pageantries—my mistress unto whom I may render mine homage and my trust?"

"'Tis a brave speech, Sir John," cried the lady, as though wishful to divert the subject; "my cousin tells me that you are a knight of great courage and renown, but he sayeth not aught of your disposition to outrival him in heroics. Good b'y'e—a promise made is a promise broken; therefore, I'll offer none. I meet you not to night at the feast, having obtained mine excuse."

Saying this, she bounded from him ere he was aware, and was speedily out of sight.

He was not a little chagrined at her abrupt departure; yet her very carelessness, and the open simplicity of her manner, only served to fix her the more deeply in his thoughts. But a problem of greater difficulty was to be resolved than how to fix the cameleon hue of woman's thought. He had a king to pacify,—wayward as a child, fickle as a lady's favour. Unless he could acquit himself by some witty quibble or device, he might bid adieu to the gaieties over which he presided. The time was short, and his wit must needs be ambling. As he passed through the court, revolving many plans for his deliverance, he was aware of a loud dispute between the two household divinities we have before noticed. Words were nigh being exchanged for blows, but they were stayed out of respect to the intruder.

Leaving Sir John to confer with those doughty disputants, let us follow the king to supper. Space forbids that we describe the wonders of this feast, and the dainties

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that were provided,—how the swans were roasted, and the herons eaten cold,—how pies were baked of the red deer, and the wild boar, not a whit too small for the reception of any moderate-sized Christian subject of his majesty's. There were turkeys, quails, poults, and plovers; but of pheasants, only two, and one for the king. The greatest triumph, however, was reserved for the confections; an artificial hen was here served, of puff-paste; her wings displayed, sitting upon eggs of the same materials. In each of these was enclosed a fat lark roasted, and seasoned with pepper and ambergris.

They sat down, but the master of the ceremonies was still absent; whereupon the king, much distempered thereby, called out to Sir George Goring.

"Our mummer and our dancer being departed,—whilk thing, aforetime, we did maist righteously inhibit,—thinkest thou, he may not henceforth eschew our service?"

"My liege, your grace's commands were to seek him a full hour agone, but the scared deer hath taken to covert. He was, peradventure, afraid of the hunting, and liketh his own neck better than the sport. He careth not, methinks, to shew his face that turns his back on his comrade's peril."

"May be," said Buckingham, "your majesty's favour is not so winsome as a lady's cheek. I would wager my cap, Jack Finett hath found a smoother tongue, but a harder service than your majesty's."

"O' my saul,—if I thought so," said the monarch, as he threw down a spoonful of buttered pease, "I would send him to the Tower, and he should write a book on Hercules his distaff."

"Or Omphale's spindle," said a voice at the lower end

of the hall, which, issuing from a mask, closely fitted, sounded wonderously hollow and portentous. A profound silence ensued,—all eyes being turned towards the speaker, who was no less a personage than the first household god, attired in his proper suit. He approached the king's table, waving his hand in token of attention,

> "The knight ye speak of, mark me well,
> I've just drawn from the castle-well."

"Mercy on us!" cried Sir Richard Hoghton. "The draw-well is more than eighty yards deep. Thou art a lying deity, and shalt be banished from this bright Olympus."—But the deity, nothing abashed, thus continued,

> "How came he thus, I dare not tell;
> My brother may the mystery dispel."

He stooped down,—rising again to the astonished eyes of the fair dames and nobles at the upper bench, in the forester's habit of Kendal green, with cloak and doublet of the same colour.

"What's now?" said James.—"Witchery and fause negromancie, o' my troth. 'T is treason, Sir Richard, to use glamour in the king's presence."

But the sylvan god continued in the doggrel of his predecessor,

> "Sir John to be forgiven would hope;
> He had been drowned, but for the rope!"

"Ay," said the king, chuckling at this opportunity, purposely given, for a display of his wit—"he'll be hanged—na doot, na doot."

"Pr'ythee, Sylvanus, or whatever thou be, bring Sir John hither, that he may dry his web in the hot sunshine

of a lady's glance," said Villiers, with an ill-suppressed sneer.

Again, this Proteus was transformed. Doffing his habit, Sir John Finett stood confessed before them. He knelt, penitently, before the king, humbly assuring his majesty, that he had been preparing this device, and many others, to please and surprise him; but that through the bungling of some, and the bashfulness of others, he was obliged to enact the parts himself. This excuse the king was graciously pleased to accept, commending him for his great diligence and zeal.

The night now wore on with much outward show of mirth and revelry; but the king went early to rest, purposing to rise betimes.

On the following day, he went out again with a great company, and killed a brace of stags, which mighty achievment, by authentic record, we find was accomplished before dinner, the king alone being able to bring down the venison.

We willingly pass over this day's banquet,—nor do we care to chronicle the feats of Morris the head cook, and his deputies of the ranges and the pastries. The boiling and roasting of poults and pullets, and the construction of comfits and confections, we consign to everlasting oblivion.

When the king rose from table, about four o'clock, as we find it in the private journal of one present, he purposed to view the alum mines, about two miles distant from the Tower; but, being eager for the sport, he went forth again a-hunting. He shot at a stag and missed. The next bolt broke the thigh bone, and the dog being long in coming, Lord Compton despatched the poor beast, whereby his capture was effected. We forbear to dwell on this and

much more, of the like interest, returning with the king to supper, where the beauteous Grace Gerard was present, and Sir John Finett, her true knight and devoted slave. Dr. Morton, then Bishop of Chester, was chaplain, doling out a long Latin grace with great unction.

The music had ceased, the second course being just served, when a signal was given for the king's pledge.

"Let each one pledge the fairest," cried the royal toast-master, moved to some unwonted gallantry, by approximation with the fair and lusty dames about his person. For it hath been wittily if not wickedly said by a popular writer in another place, that James was in all things like unto Solomon, save in the matter of women.

Now there was a brave stir throughout the assembly. Such pledging of mistresses and challenging of cups, that nothing could be like unto it.

"To the bright eyes and peerless grace of the lady Grace Gerard," said Sir John Finett, draining his goblet to the uttermost;—and the maiden's cheek glowed like a furnace.

"Said I not that he could win a lady's grace sooner than a monarch's disfavour? Nay, your majesty, I but meant that Sir John conveys the fairest eyes and the warmest hearts into his own keeping, like an *Ochus-Bochus*," said Buckingham, looking envious at the distinction he had gained.

"I see plainly that Truth is hidden in a well," said Goring, drily.

Sir John Finett, courtier and dissembler as he was, could scarcely hide the truth of this sally. But he quickly recovered his self-possession ere the king's eye could detect a change. Yet did he not escape the vigilance of

his two friends, who suspected the real cause of his absence on the preceding night.

"Thou shalt be her true knight to-morrow, and she shall be queen of our sports," said the king, graciously extending his hand to the blushing maiden.

But this speech pleased not some of the courtiers; and Buckingham, having his eye on this fair flower, secretly resolved that Sir John should not enjoy its fragrance unmolested.

On the following morning, being Sunday, there came a great company of peasants and handicraftsmen,—notorious idlers about the parish,—with a petition, wherein it was shewn, that the loyal and peaceable inhabitants of Lancashire had been long hindered of their usual diversions on Sundays and other holydays, by the rigour of Puritans, Precisians, and such like folk,* who—being enemies to all innocent and lawful mirth—did mightily begrudge, and maliciously restrain their use. These petitioners, therefore, prayed his majesty, "that he would not forbid their exercising of all honest and lawful recreation, such as dancing of men and women, archery, running, leaping, and vaulting; nor prohibit the use of May-games, May-poles, morice-dances, and other like lawful sports, so that the same should not impediment or cause neglect of divine service."

The ground of this complaint was laid in the time of Elizabeth, who, in order to reform the manners of the people, instituted a high commission in the year 1579. The commissioners were Henry Earl of Derby, Henry

* Some say this petition was presented at Myerscough; but we incline to the opinion here given.

Earl of Huntingdon, William Lord Bishop of Chester, and others. At their sittings, which were held in Manchester, they issued orders throughout the county, against "pipers and minstrels playing, making, and frequenting bear-baiting and bull-baiting on the Sabbath days, or upon any other days in time of divine service; and also against superstitious ringing of bells, wakes, and common feasts; drunkenness, gaming, and other vicious and unprofitable pursuits."

These restrictions the royal pedant thought incompatible with the public weal, and graciously answered the petitioners in suchwise that he would have these over-righteous zealots rebuked; that it was a misuse of their authority; and that he would not only grant the humble request of his subjects, but, on that very evening, he would have a masque and an allegory, with dancing and other like diversions, by the lords and other nobility there present.

Such was the origin of the famous "Book of Sports." His majesty, on returning to the capital, issued a proclamation,* stating,—

"That in his progress through Lancashire, he found it necessary to rebuke some Puritans and precise people, and took order that the said unlawful carriage should not be used by any of them hereafter, in the prohibiting and unlawfully punishing his good people, for using their lawful recreations and honest exercises upon Sundays, after divine service." "His majesty further saw that his loyal subjects in all other parts of the kingdom did suffer in the same kind, though not, perhaps, in the same degree

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* Royal Proclamation. May 21, 1618.

as in Lancashire; and he did, therefore, in his princely wisdom, publish a declaration to all his loving subjects, concerning lawful sports to be used on Sundays and festivals."—Published by his royal command in the year 1618, under the title of "The Book of Sports." The royal visit to Lancashire proved ultimately of more importance to the civil and ecclesiastical establishments of the kingdom than could have been anticipated either by the king or his subjects. This infamous "Book of Sports," formed the first link in that mysterious chain of events, ending in the downfall of the Stuarts, and their exile and expulsion from the throne.

The gladsome tidings having been communicated to the petitioners, with one accord they galloped off, shouting and huzzaing, to the great annoyance of all peaceable and sober-minded persons, and the great dishonour of that holy day.

The king attended divine service at the chapel, where Dr. Morton preached, commanding and exhorting to an obedience well pleasing to their Maker; inasmuch as it was rendered to the vice-regent of heaven, the high and mighty and puissant James, Defender of the Faith, and so forth. After this comfortable and gracious doctrine, there was a rush-bearing* and a piping before the king in the

* This ceremony was formerly used for the conveyance of rushes intended to be strewed in the church upon the clay floors between the benches. It is now generally known but as an unmeaning pageant still practised in the northern and eastern parts of Lancashire, for the purpose of levying contributions on the inhabitants. An immense banner, of silk, adorned with tinsel and gay devices, precedes the rush-cart, wherein the rushes, neatly woven and smooth cut, are piled up and

great quadrangle. Robin Hood and Maid Marian, with the fool and hobby-horse, were, doubtless, enacted to the jingling of morris-dancers and other profanities.

These fooleries put the king into such good humour that he was more witty in his speech than ordinary. Some of these sayings have been recorded, and amongst the rest, that well-known quibble which has been the origin of an absurd mistake, still current through the county, respecting the sirloin. It is said to have been knighted there by his majesty, who found, such were his knight-making propensities, that other subjects were exhausted.

The occasion, as far as we have been able to gather, was thus:—Whilst he sat at meat, casting his eyes upon a noble *surloin* at the lower end of the table, he cried out,—

"Bring hither that *surloin*, sirrah, for 't is worthy of a more honourable post, being; as I may say, not *sur*loin but *sir*loin, the noblest joint of all;" which ridiculous and desperate pun raised the wisdom and reputation of England's Solomon to the highest.

Great was the stir and preparation for the evening masque; a pageant containing many allegories and devices; dancing and merry games, with all other "lawful recreations and honest amusements." Little heed was given, we fear, to their Maker's service; these vain follies

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decorated with flowers and ribands, in rustic taste. The cart, thus laden, is drawn round to the dwellings of the principal inhabitants, by morris-dancers, who perform an uncouth dance, attended by a man in motley attire, a sort of nondescript, made up of the ancient fool and Maid Marian. This personage jingles a horse-collar hung with bells, which forms not an unsuitable accompaniment to the ceremony.

running in the heads and filling the thoughts of the few who chose to attend in the chapel; the greater portion were preparing for the entertainment, into which service they entered heartily, and without grudge.

Sir George Goring and Sir John Finett were very indefatigable on the occasion, drilling and marshalling men, women, and children; conning their lessons, and correcting the awkward and ridiculous movements and mistakes of their pupils. Hobbe and the house-steward were the foremost in their parts, having important functions allotted to them; one to grunt and howl in the similitude of a huge bear, and the other to roar in lieu of a lion, before the "*Bower of Beautie*," for such was the title or motto of the pageant. Nor was Sir John lacking in due homage to his mistress; she was appointed to enact "The Queen of Beautie." It was after much solicitation that she consented, receiving with great gravity and attention the instructions of her accomplished preceptor.

The day was nigh spent, and the sun fast sinking on the ocean, now waiting with a chariot of flame to conduct him to other skies.

Grace was just finishing her toilet, and her maid adjusting the last plait in her head-dress, when a low and guarded knock announced a visitor. The door was slightly opened, when a messenger threw in a gay billet and departed. It was superscribed thus:—"*To the Fairest, These.*"

With a quickened pulse and a tremulous hand, she glanced over the page, elaborately penned as follows:—

"The Bower of Beautie hath a snake; beware that he come not nigh thee, for his tooth has venom, and his tail a sting.

"From the mask with the black visard and silver mantle.

THESE."

She had barely finished the perusal, when there came tripping in the page of Sir John Finett, carrying a sealed billet redolent with the most costly perfume. The superscription was precisely similar, and nearly in the same hand.—"To the Fairest, These."

She hastily broke open the packet.

"Beauteous and most matchless queen! jealous of thy coming, the orb of day hasteneth to hide himself in Thetis's lap. He leaveth thee our luminary in his stead, whose twin stars shall so outmimic day that his brightness shall not be remembered. Truly am I in great heaviness and sorrow, seeing that I cannot be with you in the opening of the pageant, by reason of mine office, and my duty to the king. Yet will I not leave you without a protector. My trusty friend Weldon, will enact your faithful knighte. He weareth a black visard and mantle of spotted silver, and will accompany you to the bower, from whence he deliver-eth the queene and her distressed damsels out of durance. When the dancing begins, expect me.

THINE."

Little space was left for deliberation. The bell rung out its signal for the actors to arrange themselves; hearing which, she thrust the billets behind her stomacher, and hastened to the great court, where, on a platform supported by four wheels, was builded a sort of hut, decorated in a tawdry and fanciful style, and ycleped "The Bower of Beautie."

Into this bower the queen was to be conducted, but the uproar and confusion were indescribable; strange and antic figures hurrying to and fro, seeking their com-

panions, and crying lustily for their places. Sir John Finett and Sir George Goring fulfilled the office of whippers-in, attempting to establish order out of these undisciplined elements. Grace drew back; but suddenly there came forth an armed knight from the bower towards her, wearing a black visor and a mantle of spotted silver, courteously beseeching her that she would accompany him to her station. A great curtain of figured arras hung in front, concealing the interior, where the queen and her maidens were supposed to be held captive. Grace stepped into this temporary confinement, in which were four other ladies masked, who graciously saluted their queen. The black-faced visor having seated himself, the arras was again let down; when several men, bedizened with ribands and nosegays, wheeled off the vehicle to its destination on the green.

The bower was garnished with roses, gilliflowers, pinks, and odoriferous herbs. Garlands of artificial flowers were interspersed; likewise, imitations in satin, silk, and gold, of various trees, herbs, and fruits, not to be found in those parts. All this had been accomplished with great pains by the ladies of the queen's mimic court, Sir John Finett superintending *"The Bower of Beautie,"* as his peculiar province. To Sir George Goring were allotted the bears, satyrs, imps, angels, gods, and other like rabble, who were taught with much labour and difficulty, in so short a space, their several parts.

Sir John Finett had received a mandate to be near the king during the acts, that he might be instructed in their several uses and designs, Buckingham having signified his wish to sport a mask on the occasion; Sir John, therefore,

much to his regret, was completely debarred from approaching his mistress.

The king's coming was announced by a flourish of trumpets, and a loud bray from the delighted multitude, who sent up a shout that shook the very foundations.

Under a pavilion of crimson cloth, decked with fringes and valences of gold, walked forth the monarch. He leaned familiarly on the arm of his host, who, together with Sir John Finett, was in immediate attendance. After the king's train had passed, came a troop of morris-dancers, and the hobby-horse, who frolicked in a most ungainly fashion round the Bower of Beautie, kissing hands, and making many salutations towards their enthralled queen. Next came out a bear and a lion, accompanied by a thing intended to represent an ape, whose office it was to torment these grave animals with his tricks. But so encumbered were they in their disguise,—a heavy covering of bucks' skins and long wool,—that they had much ado to keep on their clothes, while attempting to resent the indignities they endured.

"Hang thee, Will.—keep thy paws off my tail," said lion; "dost' not see, I shall be uncovered before the king?"

"I'll baste thine hide," said bear, "if thou meddlest any more with mine."

The ape had settled himself on the back of this august-looking animal, from whence he was suddenly dislodged, much to the delight and entertainment of the king, who laughed heartily at his disaster. The ravenous animals were on their way to the bower, there to watch for the captives, making great demonstrations all the while of their blood-thirsty intent.

Bear and lion accordingly squatted down before it,

making as though they would gladly have been at supper on the fair carcasses of those within. Anon comes a mighty magician, with a long beard, and a wand of some ells in extent, purposing to effect the deliverance of the captives; but the beasts rushed upon him, and, in a trice, brought him to the ground. At this juncture the Silver knight—shewing thereby the superiority of true valour over false gramarye—should have issued from the bower, rescued the magician, and slain the beasts, opening a way for the escape of these imprisoned damsels, who were to come forth dancing, and representing a fair masque before the king;—but the magician remained unrescued, while bear and lion lay growling for a long space, not knowing what else to do. They looked about wistfully, not choosing to feast on their prostrate victim. At last, finding no change in the posture of affairs, they fairly stood erect, much to the marvel and amusement of the spectators, running off on their hind legs amid the shouts and derision of the assembly.

Sir John, apprehending some mistake, left the king for a moment to see how matters stood; but Goring had lifted up the arras, and, lo! the knight with the black visor and mantle of silver was not there, neither was the Queen of Beauty in her bower. The four disconsolate maidens still sat waiting for their cue, and expecting release. This was an unlooked-for disaster. The pageant was at a stand. On enquiry, the maidens told how that the gallant knight and the peerless queen had departed before the king's arrival, saying they would return anon.

Sir John was bewildered and alarmed. The Silver knight was trusty, and no suspicion crossed him from that source; yet was their absence wholly unaccountable. The

king, seeing some mistake in the unravelling or conception of the plot, good-naturedly commanded the minstrels to strike up a favourite tune; at the hearing of which a number of masks immediately mustered to begin dancing in the soft and dewy twilight. Amongst the rest came in Buckingham, negligently attired, and without his visor.

"I thought thee hidden amongst the maskers," said the king.

"Ay, my liege, a short space;—but the night is hot, and I am something distempered and weary in this turmoil."

Buckingham looked flushed and agitated, strangely differing from his usual manner. It was not unobserved by the king, who attributed the change to illness.

"Thou shalt continue about our person," said the monarch. "Jack, see to the sports:—the pageant hath suffered greatly from thine absence. I do think the Queen of Beauty hath played thee false."

Buckingham took his usual station by the king; and Sir John Finett, in great dolour, went forth in search of his mistress. He questioned the guests diligently, but could gain no further tidings, save that she had been seen by many in company with the Silver knight. Every minute added to his uneasiness: thoughts of a wild and terrible import haunted him. In vain he tried to shake off these intruders—they came like shadows, horrible and indistinct. His naturally sensitive and sanguine temperament, as prone to the anticipation of evil as of delight, was a curse, and not a blessing. Departed hopes may fling a deeper shadow even on the brow of Despair!—and rayless was the night which visited his spirit. It was now too evident—for he was no novice in the science—that his

admiration had awakened one dormant but hallowed affection, long lulled in the soft lap of pleasure. The maiden, with whom it was his sole aim to pass a few hours of pleasantry and amusement, had enthralled him by so sudden a spell, that he was more than half inclined to believe in the boasted skill and exploits of the sex, which have rendered Lancashire so famous. Her unaccountable absence impressed itself strangely upon his thoughts. He was in love!—and he writhed at the discovery; but he would have given worlds just then to have proclaimed it at his mistress's feet.

Scarcely conscious how the night wore on, he was obliged to act his part. Supper was announced; and he took his station where he could see the guests unmask as they entered to the banquet.

The tables were nearly filled, but the Silver knight and his fair lady were still absent. Grace Gerard is doubtless in her own chamber, was the host's reply to some enquiry from Sir John:—she had craved excuse from some slight indisposition. But this did not satisfy him to whom it was addressed: he suspected her chamber would be found unoccupied;—his heart felt wasted and desolate;—it was as if the whole fair face of Nature were blotted out,—the light being gone which rendered it visible.

"What, ho!" said the king, "bring my Sienna knight a cup of hot sack and a merry-thought, for he seems melancholic and watchful—a wary eye, but a silent tongue. Sir John, are your wits a wool-gathering with your Queen?"

"I am in my widowhood, most gracious prince,—my Queen having departed."

"More fool thou, to fling thy heart after thy wits.

Come, honest Jack, we'll have some minstrelsy after the feast,—a merry troll and a short one."

Sir John was well skilled in handling the lute and rebeck. He had been early trained to their use; and many a kind glance and tender word he had won thereby.

The feast was over, and those hushed halls thrilled to the following ditty:—

I.

"They bade me sing, they bade me smile,
They bade my heart be gay;
They call'd my spirit forth, to while
The laughing hours away,
I've sung, I've smiled: where'er my path,
Mirth's dazzling meteors shine;
All hearts have own'd its magic power,
And all are glad but mine.

II.

"I've soothed the darkest surge of woe,
And many a bosom bless'd;
Forbade the sufferer's tear to flow,
And brought the weary rest:
I've pour'd upon the bleeding heart
The balm of Hope,—the shrine
Where holier, happier thoughts shall dwell;—
But who shall gladden mine?

III.

"Forgive; 't is but one short complaint,
One pang I would reveal:
The wretch upon the torturing rack
Is not forbid to feel!
Then laugh,—let merry hearts to-night
Their brightest wreaths entwine;
The flowers that bloom on every breast
Will, withering, fade on mine!" *

* See Note at the end.

Many were the bright eyes glittering on him through their long silken lashes; but Sir John looked downward,—diligently noting something extraordinary in the disposition of his shoe-roses, or in the tie of his garter.

"One raven will set another croaking," said Sir George.

"That we may escape a concert so detestable," cried out Buckingham, "let Sir John Finett follow me, and we will reel with our fair dames, until cares whirl off like sling-stones."

"And may he that tires first, fiddle the witches' jig," said the sapient king.

A burst of harsh music followed, and Sir John's feebly-tinkling strings were thrown aside. Never had he wished so anxiously for one short hour of quietness; and right fain he was when the king retired to his chamber. His duties for that day were over, and he strolled out from the hot and oppressive atmosphere into a calm, quiet moonlight.

The cool breeze came like a healing balm upon his spirit, the soft dew fell upon his cheek,—but the fire in his veins burnt fiercely. His mistress's form, her face, the sweet influence of her smile, were fixed indelibly on his heart. Away from the bustle and cares of office,—which, like waves on the surface, for a while effaced their image,—the whole beauteous impression was revealed before him in all its loveliness and truth. His heart bounded at the thought;—it was but for a moment. Again he stood, hopeless and desolate, gazing upon the soft mist-wreath in the valley, as though expecting it would render up the form of his beloved.

Suddenly the short, swift steps of a steed were heard hurrying up the avenue. A horseman approached the

gateway: it was his friend, the *soi-disant* knight of the Silver mantle!

"How now, Weldon!*—whither have thy unlucky familiars carried thee? Hast thou bestridden the enchanted horse, or wert thou bidden to a witch-feast?"

"I have been to Myerscough with your message,—and the pains I have had for my labour."

My message!" said Sir John with amazement: "I sent thee on no other errand than to guard the lady, whom thou hast either made away with, or she hath slipped from thine hold."

"You are pleasant, Sir John!" Your tricks are well enough in court-hours. Come, be serious, and tell me thou hast had a fool's errand out of me."

"I never was more serious in my life, Weldon, I do vouch, as my head shall swing safely on its pivot. But who gave thee a message,—and to whom?"

"To our fair hostess at Myerscough. Thy page thrust a scrap of writing into my hand after prayers. The request was, that I should see the accompanying billet safely delivered, and with mine own hand, without loss of time. It was one of your curiously-folded fantastic love-billets, as I thought. Knowing I could well be spared hence,

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* This person is supposed to be the writer of a curious satire, Harl. MSS. 5191, called a Description of Scotland. Weldon's name is not attached to it in the MS., but it is duly ascribed to him by Sir Walter Scott, in his description of Holyrood chapel, in the "Antiquities of Scotland." Sir Anthony Weldon accompanied the king into Scotland; but that he returned with him is not so certain, one of his letters saying he should return by sea. By this, however, may be understood his return to the court at Edinburgh, having had leave of absence to visit his friends in London

I immediately took horse, and came in a bath of foam to the lady; but when she opened her pretty token, she drew herself erect with great majesty. 'Tell Sir John Finett,' said she, 'that when he next sends thee forth on his fooleries, to choose another butt; to shoot his arrows where they will stick, or his goose-feathers may fly back again.'"

Horror almost deprived Sir John of utterance. That some foul play had been meditated, and in all probability accomplished, was but too plain; but how, or by whom, was inscrutable as ever.

The page was straitly questioned; but he merely said that his message was given him by some person he did not recognise in the crowd at the chapel-doors, who said he was to seek Weldon forthwith, and deliver him the papers from his master. What course to adopt, or where to begin their search, were questions alike embarrassing and impossible to answer. In the end, they determined to lay the matter before the king on the morrow.

It may be needful to go back a short space to. "The Bower of Beautie," wherein the knight of the Silver mantle, having safely ensconced himself, as the reader may remember, the arras was let down; after which, being wheeled away to their destination, they were to await for the commencement of the masque. But the Silver knight, lifting up the curtain, observed they were much too early for the performance, and courteously entreated the lady that she would alight. The evening was hot, and the bower close and oppressive. An hour might, in all probability, elapse ere their presence would be required. Grace, trusting to her companion, quitted the car, strolling out amongst the masks. Gradually they left the main crowd, unconsciously

approaching the steep brow of the hill, where, looking towards the east, they beheld the broad red moon swinging out from the blue horizon. The loud hum of the revellers came softly and pleasantly on the ear. It was an hour of quietness and delight—a few hasty, happy moments snatched from these gaudy hours—the pomp and circumstance of life. Would that Sir John had been here in lieu of his friend! thought Grace. No, she did not think so,—but she felt as though such a thought might have been nursed into being with little effort. They were now stealing down the hill, and the dark waters of the Orr were leaping and bubbling at their feet.

"We must return," said the maiden, looking up, alarmed at seeing, for the first time, that they were cut off from all connexion and intercourse with their companions. Her attendant was a perfect stranger, except in name; and though counselled to rely implicitly on his care, by the master of the ceremonies himself, she felt her situation embarrassing and unpleasant.

"And why must we return?" said the mask. The tone startled her: its expression was now soft and beseeching, as though he had before spoken in a masked voice.

"Why!" said she, looking as though she would have pierced through his disguise.

"Nay, whet not thy glance so keenly. I am not what I seem,—and yet am not unseemly."

"Your jests had been better timed had they taken a fitter season.—I must hence."

"Go not, my beauteous Queen," said the stranger, taking her hand, which she dashed from her with indignation and alarm. She was darting up the crag, but was again detained.

"I will worship thee:—thou shalt be my star,—the axle of my thoughts. All——"

"Unhand me, sir,—or I'll call those who have the power to punish, as well as to humble thy presumption!"

"Whom wilt thou call, my pretty lamb? The wolf? The snake is scotched in the bower, and I but beseech thy gratitude. How that look of scorn becomes thee! Pout not so, my Queen, or thou wilt indeed make an excuse for my rudeness."

"How! again this insult?—Begone, or thou shalt rue that ever thy thought escaped thy tongue. I'll report thee to thy betters."

"My betters! and who be they, maiden? Thou knowest me not, *perdie*. Hath not Sir John Finett shorn his love-locks and eschewed thy service, after leaving thy bower the other night?"

This taunt raised her indignation to a blaze;—her bosom swelled at the rebuke.

Still he retained her hand—with the other she clung to a withered tree, whose roots held insecurely by the rock. Making another effort, she sprung from his grasp; but the tree was rent from its hold, and she fell with it to the edge of the precipice. Ere the Silver knight could interpose, a faint shriek announced her descent,—a swift crash was heard amongst the boughs and underwood,—a groan and a rebound. He saw her disappear behind a crag. Then came one thrilling moment of terror, one brief pause in that death-like stillness, and a heavy plunge was heard in the gulf below! He listened—his perceptions grew more acute—eye and ear so painfully susceptible, and their sensibility so keen, that the mind scarcely distinguished its own reactions from realities—from outward

impressions on the sense. He thought he heard the gurgle and the death-throe. Then the pale face of the maiden seemed to spring out from the abyss. He rushed down the precipice. Entangled in the copse-wood and bushes, some time elapsed ere he gained the narrow path below. He soon found, as in most other situations, the shortest road the longest—that the beaten track would have brought him quicker to his destination; but these nice calculations were forgotten. All pranked out and bedizened as he was, the puissant knight plunged into the gulf,—but his exertions were fruitless, and he gave up the search. His love for the maiden living and breathing, did not prompt him to drown himself for her corpse. With hasty steps he regained the Tower, where he doffed his dripping garments unobserved.

Sir John Finett, by advice from his friend Weldon, determined on acquainting their host with the lady's disappearance. They had a shrewd suspicion that Buckingham was the contriver of this daring outrage; though from his great power, influence, and audacity, they had every thing to fear and but little to hope from the result. Yet no time should be lost in the attempt.

As they entered the hall, Sir Gilbert Hoghton and several of the guests were still making merry after the feast. Calling him aside, they communicated the dismal tidings.

"Grace Gerard a-missing, say ye?"

"'T is even so," said Sir John: "we have yet no clue to the search; but this night shall not pass without the attempt, at any rate. In the morning we will to the king with our complaint."

"Boy," said the baronet to his little henchman, "go to the woman's suite, and rouse Grace Gerard's maid."

"The woman was in the kitchen some half-hour agone, conveying her mistress a warm draught, or some such puling diet," said the page.

"Haste," cried Sir John impatiently, marvelling at this unexpected intelligence,—"the lad is blinded by some misapprehension. I'll forfeit my best jewel she is not in her chamber. This interlude works i' the plot—part of the trickery now enacting."

But the page made a quick return.

"What news?" said Finett.

"The lady is gone to rest; something discomposed though, and out of spirits. So says her maiden, whom I would have questioned more straitly, but she rebuked me sharply for my impertinence."

"Pray you, send and question her," said Sir John.

"Nay," returned Sir Gilbert, smiling, "I'll be bound the lady is safe; and her maiden has other guess-matters to look to than letting out the secrets of her mistress's chamber."

They were obliged to rest satisfied, or rather unsatisfied, with this answer. But the mystery was more and more inexplicable. Either some laughable mistake or some deep-laid villany was intended. Sir John dared not pursue the subject to this extremity. He felt assured of her purity and honour. Her manners, so confiding and unsuspicious, showed a heart unacquainted with guile.

After a sleepless night Sir John arose, feverish and unrefreshed. He threw open the window of his chamber, which looked into the court-yard. Near a side-postern stood a grey palfrey, caparisoned for a lady's use, and

impatiently awaiting its burden. The hour was too early for morning rambles, but the beast was evidently equipped for a journey. Two other steeds were now led forth, as if for the attendants. He caught a glimpse of Grace Gerard's maid, who seemed, by her dress, to be of the party whose movements he was so anxious to ascertain. He suspected this sudden departure was for the purpose of escaping without his observance. He hurried towards the stairs: just entering the corridor, he met Grace Gerard. She was evidently confused at his appearance. It was but for a moment: her spirit grappled with the occasion; and she replied firmly, and with becoming dignity, to his questions.

"Whither away, our beauteous Queen?" said he, bowing almost to the ground. "Are you bound for some isle of the Western Ind, getting the start of Phœbus in his nightly race to those gem-bearing climes? Methinks the sun is departing from us, though but just risen."

"'T is my purpose to depart, Sir John. This clime is too bright, and its beams too fervid, for a lady's eye."

"One word in sober speech:—Wherefore?"

"I know your question, Sir John. Time hastens, and I reply. Your knight of the Silver Mantle I proclaim a recreant, as treacherous as he is base. Sir John, for my—no, for your own sake—

"Another stole into his place," said he, interrupting her with great eagerness. "A base-born changeling!—some villain, who, under this disguise, abused our honourable intent. But say, peerless princess, to whose prowess we owe your rescue?"

"'T is my first venture into the unhallowed limits of your licentious court; and, through the grace that hath

preserved me harmless, I here resolve it shall be my last. By your instructions, Sir John, I relied implicitly on the protection of your friend. He would fain have abused his trust, but I escaped from the offered insult. Struggling to free my hand from his grasp, by yonder hill-side, I lost my footing. I fell down the steep unhurt. Fear lent me unwonted strength, and I escaped unseen, round the narrow pathway. My discourteous knight thought, doubtless, I had tumbled into the roaring abyss; for the night-mist hung below, and I heard a huge fragment of rock, loosened in my descent, plunge into the dimly-rolling waters. Now, hear me: my resolve is taken, and no earthly influence or persuasion shall stay me. I was bewildered, yet flattered by your follies: foolish and thoughtless enough to frolick and flutter on the very brink of a precipice. I was dazzled by the glittering but dangerous excitement. Conscience spoke; but I durst not listen. My course of life hitherto has been through scenes of gentleness and peace, and I could not look on your bustle and dissipation without alarm. Yet was I persuaded to mingle in your sports yesterday—that day hallowed by the last fiat of its Creator, wherein the soul, freed awhile from the cares of earth, may prostrate itself in homage before Him who said, 'It is mine!' Justly punished for trifling with my better thoughts, my escape shall not be without its acknowledgment."

Sir John was silent. She stood before him like some purer, brighter thing than could be deemed akin to this polluted earth.

"Those siren waves were bearing me on to the gulf, where——" She paused a moment, shuddering at the dark retrospect of the past.

"Where all your pomp and pageantry will be overwhelmed, and yourselves, for ever, in the same irretrievable ruin!"

Sir John looked uneasy, and his eye wandered, as if in search of some object wherewith to throw off these gloomy anticipations. The maiden again spoke:—

"It seemed as though a veil, invisible heretofore, were suddenly undrawn. The glory and the baseness, the splendour and the pollution, were at once revealed. The hand unseen had drawn it aside. I would now shun—I hope for ever—these paths of folly; and I bid farewell to your pleasures without a murmur or a regret."

Sir John, courtier though he was, ardently and willingly rendering homage at the shrine of pleasure and dissipation, was awe-struck. Conscience echoed a fearful response; and he shrunk before the reproof he could not shun.

"Without regret!" said he, faltering and abashed. "I had hoped—perhaps wished—but it was too presumptuous. My purest thoughts would have sullied so pure a shrine."

"Stay, Sir John; though the confession be humbling to a maiden's pride, yet my heart tells me 't is the last time we meet; and it is the only acknowledgment,—I render it to your honesty and good faith." Her voice grew hesitating and tremulous. "There was a tendril twining about my heart; but it is wrung off, and I am again—alone!"

Her heart was full, and her whole frame convulsed by some overpowering emotion. An adieu died upon her lips; but she resolutely refused any further communication. Hastening to the court-yard, she mounted her little white palfry, and quitted for ever those fascinating and dangerous allurements, which, having once felt, few have had the power to withstand.

We need scarcely add, that, amid the gaieties and splendours by which the lover was enthralled, the recollection of Grace Gerard sometimes mingled in the revelries of this votary of pleasure. It often came as a warning and a rebuke. By degrees the impression grew less powerful. Each succeeding wave from the ever-tossing ocean left the traces less distinct, until they were overwhelmed in the dull tide of oblivion.

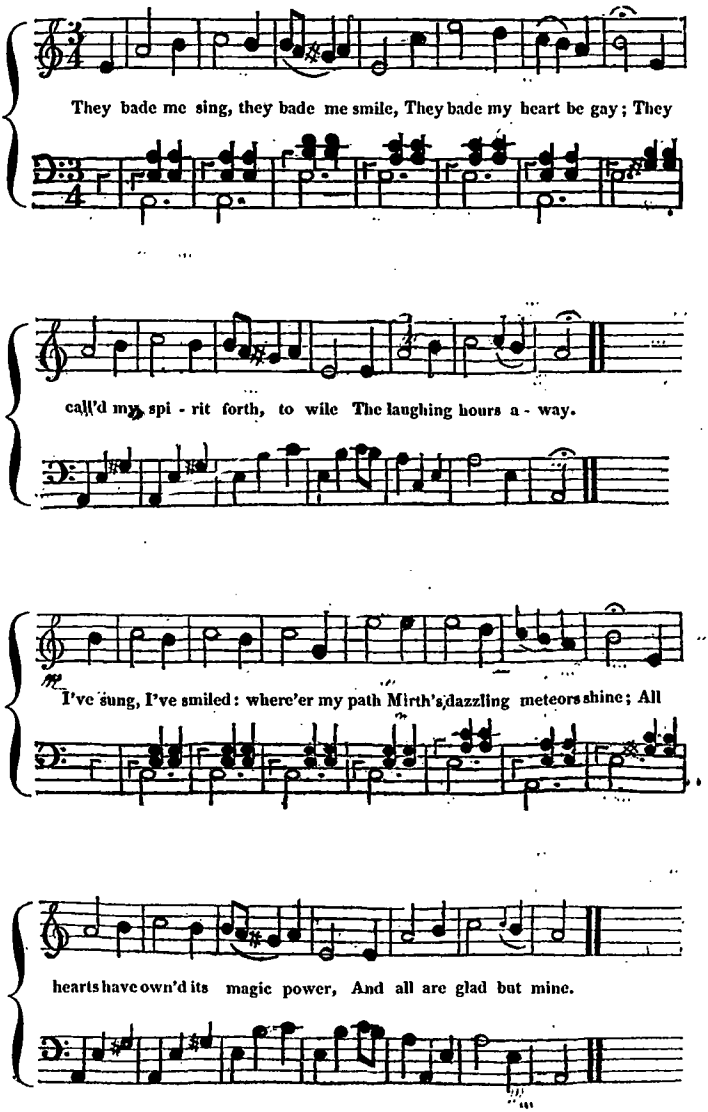
NOTE ON THE BALLAD,—p. 117.

The *music* to these words is *traditionary*, if we may be allowed the expression. It is one of the many wild and characteristic melodies floating about, perhaps unappropriated, on the popular breath, varied indefinitely, according to the humour of the performer. The author has listened to several of these ditties: some of them he thinks peculiar to this and the neighbouring counties. They are generally sung by the labouring classes, and would, in many cases, defy any attempt to commit them to writing, being apparently founded upon a ratio of tones and semitones at variance with our diatonic scale. From this we might almost be led to imagine some truth in the theory, that the ancients had different scales, peculiar to their different moods; a theory, which, however impossible it may be considered, is not without its advocates, who will perhaps not be displeased to find here some slight confirmation of their opinions. Yet in these songs the prevailing character of the minor key may generally be detected, which, from its being imperfect, and probably vitiated by the mistakes of these rustic melodists, may give a colour to the notion of a change in the scale.

The great antiquity of these melodies is unquestionable, and it would be an interesting enquiry to trace them back through remote ages, perhaps to the Jewish temple and the tent of the patriarchs. The author has found in them a strong resemblance to the Hebrew music, sounds which, since the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, and the destruction of their temple, 606 B.C., and in consequence of musical instruments being afterwards forbidden, they have clung to with increased tenacity, preserving their ancient melodies, and bequeathing them by memory from one generation to another with the same jealous care that a miser would his treasure, and as the last melancholy relics of a "kingdom passed away."

Algarotti says, "Those airs alone remain for ever engraven on the memory of the public, that paint images to the mind, or express the passions, and are for that reason called the speaking airs, because more congenial to nature, which never can be justly imitated but by a beautiful simplicity, that will always bear away the palm from the most laboured refinement of art."

The author has ventured to give the following air, which he fancies would almost suggest the words of the song to which Sir John Finett is supposed to have appropriated it. As we have before mentioned, the tune is traditionary, possessing some of the peculiar characteristics we have described. It bears a considerable resemblance to the ancient Jewish music, and likewise to the airs generally given to the little snatches of old ballads in Shakspeare's Plays, which are supposed to have been handed down successively from the performers in his time; being then probably "household" music more ancient than the ballads themselves. This opinion seems warranted by the poet himself, in that beautiful allusion with which he introduces one of the songs of the *Clown*, in Twelfth Night:—

"Mark it, Cesario; it is old and plain:
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,
Do use to chant it; it is silly sooth,
And dallies with the innocence of love
Like the old age."

They bade me sing, they bade me smile, They bade my heart be gay; They
call'd my spi - rit forth, to wile The laughing hours a - way.
I've sung, I've smiled: where'er my path Mirth's dazzling meteors shine; All
hearts have own'd its magic power, And all are glad but mine.

THE

LANCASHIRE WITCHES.

" More swift than lightning can I flye
About this aery welkin soone;
And, in a minute's space, descrye
Each thing that 's done below the moone."

BEN JONSON.

" When I consider whether there are such persons as *witches*, my mind is divided: I believe, in general, that there is such a thing as witchcraft, but can give no credit to any particular instance of it."

ADDISON.

Drawn by G. Pickering. Engraved by Wm. Finden.

London, Published by Longman, & Co. 1829.

THE

LANCASHIRE WITCHES.

THE term witchcraft, says the historian of Whalley, is now "transferred to a gentler species of fascination, which my fair countrywomen still continue to exert in full force, without any apprehension of the county magistrates, or even of the King in council."

Far different was the application in days of old. The common parish witch is thus described by a contemporary writer, as an old woman "with a wrinkled face, a furred brow, a hairy lip, a gobber tooth, a squint eye, a squeaking voice, or a scolding tongue; having a rugged coat on her back, a skull-cap on her head, a spindle in her hand, and a dog or cat by her side." Such was the witch of real life when this superstition was so prevalent in our own neighbourhood, and even throughout England. From the beginning of the reign of James the First to the concluding part of the reign of James the Second, it may be considered as having attained the zenith of its popularity. —"Witchcraft and kingcraft both came in with the Stuarts and went out with them." It was as if his *infernal* majesty had taken a lesson from his *sacred* majesty, and issued a

Book of Sports for his loyal subjects. "The Revolution put to rights the faith of the country as well as its constitution."—"The laws were more liberally interpreted and rationally administered. The trade of witch-finding ceased to be reputable or profitable;" and that silly compilation, the "Demonology" of James, which, with the severe laws enacted against witchcraft by Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth, had conjured up more witches and familiars than they could quell, was consigned to the book-worm and the dust. It is said in the Arabian tales, that Solomon sent out of his kingdom all the demons that he could lay his hands on, packed them up in a brazen vessel, and cast them into the sea. But James, "our English Solomon," "imported by his book all that were flying about Europe, to plague the country, which was sufficiently plagued already in such a sovereign."

This sapient ruler, who, it is said, "taught divinity like a king, and made laws like a priest," in the first year of his reign made it felony to suckle imps, &c. This statute, which was repealed March 24, 1736, describes offences declared felonious, thus:—

"One that shall use, practise, or exercise any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit, or consult, covenant with, entertain or employ, feed or reward, any evil or wicked spirit, to or for any intent or purpose; or take up any dead man, woman, or child, out of his, her, or their grave, or any other place where the dead body resteth; or the skin, bone, or other part of any dead person to be employed or used in any manner of witchcraft, sorcery, charm, or enchantment; or shall practise or exercise any witchcraft, &c., whereby any person shall be killed, destroyed, wasted, consumed, pined, or lamed in his or her

body, or any part thereof: such offenders, duly and lawfully convicted and attainted, shall suffer death."

As might be expected, witchcraft so increased in consequence of these denunciations, that, "in the course of fifty years following the passing of this Act, besides a great number of single indictments and executions, fifteen were brought to trial at Lancaster in 1612, and twelve condemned; in 1622, six were tried at York; 1634, seventeen condemned at Lancaster; 1644, sixteen were executed at Yarmouth; 1645, fifteen condemned at Chelmsford, and hanged; in the same and following year, about forty at Bury in Suffolk; twenty more in the county, and many in Huntingdon; and (according to the estimate of Ady) some thousands were burnt in Scotland."

Popular hatred rendered the existence of a reputed witch so miserable, that persons bearing that stigma often courted death in despair, confessing to crimes which they had never committed, for the purpose of ridding themselves of persecution.

"One of the latest convictions was that of Amy Duny and Rose Cullender, before Sir Matthew Hale at Bury, in 1664. They were executed, and died maintaining their innocence." Their execution was a foul blot upon his name, as it is scarcely to be doubted but that they were the victims of imposture. It was clearly ascertained by experiments in the judge's presence, that the children who pretended to be bewitched, when their eyes were covered, played off their fits and contortions at the touch of some other person, mistaking it for that of the accused; yet "he charged the jury without summing up the evidence, dwelling only upon the certainty of the fact that

there were witches, for which he appealed to the Scriptures, and, as he said, to 'the wisdom of all nations;' and the jury having convicted, he, next morning, left them for execution."

But we proceed with a few explanatory notices respecting that portion of the history of this superstition, which will be found interwoven with the traditionary matter in our text.

A number of persons, inhabitants of Pendle Forest, were apprehended in the year 1633, upon the evidence of Edmund Robinson, a boy about eleven years old, who deposed before two of his majesty's justices at Padiham, that on All Saints' day he was getting "bulloes," when he saw two greyhounds—a black one and a brown one—come running over the field towards him. When they came nigh they fawned on him, and he supposed they belonged to some of the neighbours. He expected presently that some one would follow; but seeing no one, he took them by a string which they had tied to their collars, and thought he would hunt with them. Presently a hare sprung up near to him, and he cried "loo, loo," but the dogs would not run. Whereupon he grew angry, and tied them to a bush for the purpose of chastising them, but instead of the black greyhound he now beheld a woman, the wife of one Dickonson, a neighbour; the other was transformed into a little boy. At this sight he was much afraid, and would have fled; but the woman stayed him, and offered him a piece of silver like a shilling if he would hold his peace. But he refused the bribe; whereupon she pulled out a bridle and threw it over the little boy's head, who was her familiar, and immediately he became a white horse. The witch then took the deponent before her, and

away they galloped to a place called Malkin Tower, by the Hoarstones at Pendle. He there beheld many persons appear in like fashion; and a great feast was prepared, which he saw, and was invited to partake, but he refused. Spying an opportunity, he stole away, and ran towards home. But some of the company pursued him, until he came to a narrow place called "the Boggard-hole," where he met two horsemen; seeing which, his tormentors left off following him. He further said, that on a certain day he saw a neighbour's wife, of the name of Loynd, sitting upon a cross piece of wood within the chimney of his father's dwelling-house. He called to her, saying, "Come down, thou Loynd wife," and immediately she went up out of sight. Likewise upon the evening of All Saints before named, his father sent him to seal up the kine, when, coming through a certain field he met a boy who began to quarrel with him, and they fought until his face and ears were bloody. Looking down, he saw the boy had cloven feet, and away he ran. It was now nearly dark; but he descried, at a distance, a light like a lantern. Thinking this was carried by some of his friends, he made all haste towards it, and saw a woman standing on a bridge, whom he knew to be Loynd's wife; turning from her he again met with the boy, who gave him a heavy blow on the back, after which he escaped. On being asked the names of the women he saw at the feast, he mentioned seventeen persons, all of whom were committed to Lancaster for trial. They were found guilty, and sentenced to be executed. The judge, however, respited them, and reported the case to the king in council.

The celebrated John Webster, author of "The Disco-

very of pretended Witchcraft," afterwards took this young witch-finder in hand. He says,—

"This said boy was brought into the church at Kildwick (in Craven), a large parish church, where I, being curate there, was preaching in the afternoon, and was set upon a stall to look about him, which moved some little disturbance in the congregation for a while. After prayers, I enquiring what the matter was, the people told me it was the boy that discovered witches; upon which I went to the house where he was to stay all night, where I found him, and two very unlikely persons that did conduct him, and manage the business.

"I desired to have some discourse with the boy in private; but that they utterly refused. Then, in the presence of a great many people, I took the boy near me, and said, 'Good boy, tell me truly and in earnest, didst thou see and hear such strange things of the meeting of witches as is reported by many that thou didst relate?'— But the two men, not giving the boy leave to answer, did pluck him from me, and said he had been examined by two *able* justices of the peace, *and they never did ask him such a question.* To whom I replied, the persons accused had the more wrong. As the laws of England, and the opinions of mankind then stood, a mad dog in the midst of a congregation, would not have been more dangerous than this wicked and mischievous boy, who, looking around him, could, according to his own caprice, put any one or more of the people in peril of tortures or of death."

Four of the accused only were sent to London, and examined by the king in person. In the end they were set at liberty, but not from the sagacity of the examiners,

the boy, Robinson, having confessed that he was suborned to give false evidence against them. One of these poor creatures, strange to say, had confessed the crime with which she was charged. In the Bodl. Lib. Dods. MSS. v. 61, p. 47, is the confession itself, wherein she gives a circumstantial and minute account of the transactions which took place between her and a familiar whom she calls Mamilian, describing the meetings, feasts, and all the usual routine of witchery and possession.—(See *Whitaker's Whalley*).

THE

LANCASHIRE WITCHES.

PART FIRST.

THE mill went merrily round, and Giles the miller sung and whistled from morning to noon, and from noon till evening, save when the mulcting-dish was about to be emboweled in the best sack; a business too serious for such levity, requiring careful and deliberate thought.

Goody Dickisson, the miller's wife, was a fat, round, pursy dame, of some forty years' travel through this wilderness of sorrow, and a decent, honest, sober, and well-conditioned housewife she was; cleanly, thrifty, and had an excellent cheese-press, which the whole neighbourhood could testify.

But the days of man's happiness are numbered, and woman's too, as the following narrative will set forth.

The mill had stood, for ages it may be, at the foot of a wild and steep cliff, forming the eastern extremity of the dreary range of Cliviger;* an elevated mountainous pass, from whence the waters descend both to the eastern and

* Clyppigreyne, *or the rocky district.*

western seas. Upon those almost inaccessible crags the rock-eagle and falcon built their nests, unscared by the herdsman, who in vain attempted their destruction.

Through this pass, the very gorge of the English Appenines, the Calder,* a rapid and narrow torrent, brought an unfailing supply of grist to the ever-going hopper of Giles Dickisson.

Not far from this happy abode, in the innermost part of the gorge, where the rocks of Lancashire and Yorkshire frown in close but harmless proximity, at an immense height,—the road and this narrow cleft only separating their barriers,—rises a crag of a singular shape, jutting far out from the almost perpendicular strata beneath; its form is precisely that of a gigantic helmet, hammered out by the fanciful artist into the likeness of an eagle, its wings partly outstretched, and its beak—the point of the crag—overshadowing the grim head of some gaunt warrior.—With but little aid from the imagination, the whole features may be discerned; hence it was denominated, "*The Eagle Crag.*" But another appellation, more awful and mysterious, might be attached to it—a reminiscence of those "deeds without a name," which have rendered this district of Lancashire so fearfully notorious,—"The Witches' Horse-block."

The narrow pass we have described, opens out into a succession of picturesque valleys, abounding in water-falls of considerable depth and beauty, and expanding towards the north in tracts of fertile pasture-ground to the base of

* Col-dwr, or *narrow water*. See Whitaker's etymology of the word.—*History of Manchester.*

Pendle, well known as the reputed scene of those mysteries in which "the witches of Pendle" acted so conspicuous a part.

Towards the close of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the fame, or rather the infamy, of witchcraft, infested this once-peaceful and sequestered district. The crag we have just noticed, was, no doubt, to the apprehensions of the simple-hearted peasant, oft visited by the unhallowed feet of weirds and witches pluming themselves for flight to the great rendezvous at Malkin Tower, by the side of "the mighty Pendle."

Little did our country deserve, in those days, the name of "Merry England." Plague or the most noisome pestilence would have been a visitation of mercy, compared to the miseries caused by so dark a superstition. "Even he who lived remote from the scene of this spiritual warfare, though few such there could be, so rapidly was it transferred from county to county to the remotest districts;—he, in whose vicinity no one was suspected of dealing with the foul fiend, whose children, cattle, or neighbours shewed no symptoms of being marks for those fiery darts which often struck from a distance, yet would he not escape a sort of epidemic gloom, a vague apprehension of the mischief which might be. The atmosphere he breathed, would come to him thick with foul fancies; he would ever be hearing or telling some wild and melancholy tale of crime and punishment. His best feelings and enjoyments would be dashed with bitterness, suspicion, and terror, as he reflected, that, though uninvaded, yet these were at the mercy of malignant fellow-mortals, leagued with more malignant spirits, the laws and limits of whose operations were wholly undefinable.

What must have been his feelings on whom the evil eye had glared,—against whom the spell had been pronounced; on whom misfortunes came thick and fast, by flood and field, at home and abroad, in business and in pleasure; whose cattle died, whose crops were blighted, and about whose bed and board, invisible, unwelcome, and mischievous guests held their revels; who saw not in his calamities the results of ignorance and error, to be averted by caution, nor the inflictions of Heaven to be borne with resignation, but was the victim of a compact, in which his disasters were part of the price paid by the powers of darkness for an immortal soul? He who pined in consumption, supposed that his own waxen effigy was revolving and melting at the charmed fire; the changes of his sensations told him when wanton cruelty damped the flame, to waste it lingeringly, or roused it in the impatience of revenge; and when came those sharp and shooting pains, the hags were thrusting in their bodkins, and their laugh rung in his ears. They sat upon his breast asleep;—he awoke gasping, and as he started up, he saw them melting into air. Yet more miserable was the wight whom the fiends were commissioned bodily to possess;—with whose breathing frame an infernal substance was incorporate and almost identified;—whose thoughts were sufferings, and his words involuntary blasphemies. Can we wonder that all this was not borne passively;—that its authors were hunted out, even, if needful, by their own charms;—that suspicion grew into conviction, and conviction demanded vengeance;—that it was deemed a duty to hold them up to public hatred, and drag them to the bar of public justice;—and that their blood was eagerly thirsted after, of which the shedding was

often believed not merely a righteous retribution, but the only efficient relief for the sufferers?

The notion of witchcraft was no innocent and romantic superstition, no scion of an elegant mythology; but was altogether vulgar, repulsive, bloody, and loathsome. It was a foul ulcer on the face of humanity. Other vagaries of the mind have been associated with lofty or with gentle feelings;—they have belonged more to sportiveness than to criminality;—they are the poetry interspersed on the pages of the history of opinions;—they seem to be dreams of sleeping reason, and not the putrescence of its mouldering carcass; but this has no bright side, no redeeming quality whatever." *

The human body is not more liable to contagion than is that faculty of the mind which is called imagination. That many of the accused believed in their crime, we have sufficient evidence in their own voluntary confessions, as well as in the traditions handed down to us on this subject. Both knavery and delusion were at work, as the following incidents will abundantly manifest. They have been selected from a wide range of materials on this important topic, as illustrating the varied operations of the same delusion on different orders and grades of mind,—the temptations warily suited to each disposition, all tending to the same crime, and ultimately to the same punishment.

Our lusty miller had no children: it was a secret source of grief and anxiety to his dame, and many an hour of

* See an able article on this subject in the Retrospective Review. Vol. V. Part I.

repining and discontent was the consequence. Yet Giles Dickisson's song was none the heavier; and if his wheel went merrily round, his spirits whirled with it, and danced and frolicked in the sunshine of good humour, like the spray and sparkle from his own mill-race. But a change was gathering on his wife's countenance: her grief grew sullen; her aspect stern and forbidding:—some hidden purpose was maturing: she seldom spoke to her husband. When addressed, she seemed to arouse from a sort of stupor, unwillingly forcing a reply.

"She is bewitched," thought Giles. He had his suspicions; but he could not confidently point out the source of the mischief.

One evening, as Goody Dickisson was sitting alone, pondering and discontented, there came in one Mal Spencer, a dark and scowling hag, to whom Giles bore no good will. He had beforetime forbidden his wife to hold any intercourse with this witch-woman, who was an object generally of suspicion and mistrust. If the "evil eye" can be supposed to inhabit a human frame, this old woman had an undisputed claim to its possession. This night, however, old Molly came hobbling in without further ceremony than a "Good e'en, thou Dickisson wife," and took her seat opposite the dame in the miller's own chair. "Aroynt thee, witch," should have been returned to such an ill-omened salute; but the miller's wife was either unwilling or unable to utter this well-known preservative against the malice of the Evil Ones.

The horse-shoe had been taken down from the door, and the blessed herb, moly, was incautiously thrown aside: neither had Goody Dickisson offered up the usual petition that evening, to be defended from the snares of the devil.

Her discontent was too great, and she was in a fitter mood for murmuring than prayer.

Leaning her long, thin chin upon a little crutch, and throwing her bleared eyes full upon the dame, old Molly abruptly exclaimed, in a voice like the croaking of a raven:—

"Thou hast asked for children, but they are denied thee. What said I to thee, Goody Dickisson, in the clough yonder, by the hollow trunk of the oak? Rememberest thou, when thou saidest thou wouldst pawn thy body for the wish of thy soul?"

Dame Dickisson waxed pale, and her knees shook; but the hag went on.

"Worship the master I serve, and thou shalt have thy desire—ay, and more!"

"More!—What meanest thou?"

"Come to the feast, as I have bidden thee. If thou likest not the savour of our company, thou shalt depart, and without harm."

"But who shall give me a safe conduct that I come back, and harmless as I went? Once in your possession, methinks——"

"What!" shouted the beldame with a look of dark and devilish malignity:—"the word of a prince! Shall Goody Dickisson, the miller's wife, hold it in distrust? Go, poor fool, and chew thy bitterness, and bake thy bannocks, and fret thy old husband until thy writhen flesh rot from thy bones, and thou knawest them for malice and vexation. Is it not glorious to ride on the wind—to mount the stars—to kiss the moon through the dark rolling clouds, when the blast scatters them in its might? To ride unharmed on their huge peaks tipped with thunder? To be

for ever young in desire and enjoyment, though old and haggard and bent double with age and infirmities? To have our wish and our revenge—ay, and the bodies of our enemies wasting before our spells, like wax to the flame? But go, sneak and drivel, and mind thy meal and barley-cakes, and go childless to thy grave."

She rose as if to depart; but Goody Dickisson's evil destiny prevailed, and she promised to attend the feast with this condition only, that no harm should befall her, nor force nor entreaty should be used to win her consent to join their confederacy. But she returned not from that unhallowed assembly, until body and soul were for ever under the dominion of the destroyer.

The mill went merrily on no more, and the miller's song was still. He looked a heavy and a doomed man. Strange suspicions haunted him. His wife's ill humour he could have borne; but her very laugh now made him tremble: it was as if the functions of mind and body were animated by a being distinct from herself. Her countenance shewed not that her thoughts mingled in either mirth or misery, except at times, when terrible convulsions seemed to pass over like the sudden roll of the sea, tossed by some unseen and subterraneous tempest. The neighbours began to shun his dwelling. His presence was the signal for stolen looks and portentous whispers. To church his wife never came; but the bench, her usual sitting-place, was deserted. At the church-doors, after sermon, when the price of grain, the weather, and other marketable commodities were discussed and settled, Giles was evidently an object of avoidance, and left to trudge home alone to his own cheerless and gloomy hearth.

Dick Hargreave's only cow was bewitched. The most

effectual and approved method of ascertaining under whose spell she laboured was as follows:—

The next Friday, a pair of breeches was thrown over the cow's horns; she was then driven from the shippen with a stout cudgel. The place to which she directed her flight was carefully watched, for there assuredly must dwell the witch. To the great horror and dismay of Giles Dickisson, the cow came bellowing down the lane, tail up, in great terror—telling, as plain as beast could speak, of her distress, until she came to a full pause, middle deep in his own mill-dam. This was a direct confirmation to his suspicions; but the following was a more undeniable proof, if need were, of his wife's dishonest confederacy with the powers of darkness.

One morning, ere his servant-man Robin had taken the grey mare from the stable, Giles awoke early, and found his wife had not lain by his side. He had beforetime felt half roused in the night from a deep but uneasy slumber; but he was too heavy and bewildered to recollect himself, and sleep again overcame him ere he could satisfy his doubts. He had either dreamt, or fancied he had dreamt, that his wife was, at some seasons, away for a whole night together, and he was rendered insensible by her spells. This morning, however, he awoke before the usual time, probably from some failure in the charm, and he met her as she was ascending the stairs. Something like alarm or confusion was manifest. She had been to look after the cattle, she stammered out, scolding Robin for an idle lout to lie a-bed so long. The stable-door was open. With an aching heart, he went in. The grey mare was in a bath of foam, panting and distressed as though from some recent journey. Whilst pondering on this strange occurrence,

Robin came in. His master taxed him with dishonesty. After much ado, he confessed that his mistress had many times of late borrowed the mare for a night, always returning before the good man awoke. Giles was too full of trouble to rate Robin as he deserved, contenting himself with many admonitions and instructions how to act in the next emergency.

Not many nights after, as Robin was late in the stable, his mistress came with the usual request, and her magic bridle in her hand.

"Now, good Robin, the cream is in the bowl, and the beer behind the spigot, and my good man is in bed."

"Whither away, mistress?" said Robin, diligently whisping down and soothing the mare, who trembled from head to foot when she heard her mistress's voice.

"For a journey, Robin. I have business at Colne; but I will not fail to come back again before sunrise."

"Ay, mistress, this is always your tale; but measter catched her in a woundy heat last time, and will not let her go."

"But, Robin, she shall be in the stable and dry, two hours before my old churl gets up."

"But measter says she maunna go."

"Thou hast told him, then,—and a murrain light on thee!"

With eyes glistening like witch-fires, did the dame bestow her malison. Robin half repented his refusal; but he was stubborn, and his courage not easily shaken. Besides, he had bragged at the last Michaelmas feast, that he cared not a rush for never a witch in the parish. He had an *Agnus Dei* in his bosom, and a leaf from the holy herb in his clogs; and what recked he of spells and incantations?

Furthermore, he had a waistcoat of proof given to him by his grandmother.*

"Since thou hast denied me the mare, I'll take thee in her place."

Robin felt in his bosom for the *Agnus Dei* cake, but it was gone!—He had thrown off his waistcoat, too, for the work, and his clogs were lying under the rack. Before he could furnish himself with these counter-charms, Goody Dickisson threw the bridle upon him, using these portentous words:—

"Horse, horse, see thou be;
And where I point thee, carry me."

Swift as the rush of the wind, Robin felt their power. His nature changed: he grew more agile and capacious; and without further ado, found Goody upon his back, and his own shanks at an ambling gallop, on the high road to Pendle. He panted and grew weary, but she urged him on with an unsparing hand, lashing and spurring with all her might, until at last poor Robin, unused to such expedition, flagged and could scarcely crawl. But needs must when the witches drive. Rest and respite were denied, until, almost dead with toil and terror, he halted in one of the steep gullies of Pendle, near to Malkin Tower.

* "On Christmas daie at night, a threed must be sponne of flax, by a little virgine girl, in the name of the divell; and it must be by her woven, and also wrought with the needle. On the breste or fore part thereof must be made, with needle-work, two heads; on the head of the right side must be a hat, and a long beard,—the left head must have on a crown, and it must be so horrible, that it maie resemble Beelzebub; and on each side of the wastecote must be made a crosse."—*Discoverie of Witchcraft by Reginald Scott*, 1584.

It was an old grey-headed ruin, solitary and uninhabited. The cold October wind whistled through its joints and crannies;—the walls were studded with bright patches of moss and lichen; darkness and desolation brooded over it, unbroken by aught but the cry of the moor-fowl and the stealthy prowl of the weasel and wild-cat.

But this lonesome and time-hallowed ruin was now lit up as for some gay festival, lights were flickering through the crevices, and the coming of the guests, each mounted on her enchanted steed, was accompanied by loud and fiend-like acclamations. Shrieks and howlings were borne from afar upon the blast. Unhallowed words and unutterable curses came on the hollow wind. Forms of indescribable and abominable shape flitted through the troubled elements. Robin, trembling all over with fright and fatigue, was told by his mistress to graze where he could, while she went in to the feast:—"Make good use of thy time, for in two hours I shall mount thee back again."

This was poor sustenance for Robin's stomach,—furze and heath were not at all to his mind, and he peeped about for a quiet resting-place. Here he was kicked and bitten by others of the herd: several of them were in the like pitiable condition with himself; but some were really of the brute kind, and these fared the best and were better mannered than most of their humane companions. Often did our unfortunate hero wish himself in their place. Having little else to do, he was prompted by curiosity to approach the building, from whence the loud din of mirth and revelry grated harshly on his ears. A long chink disclosed to him some part of the mysteries within. There sat on the floor a great company of witches, feasting and cramming with all their might. An elderly gentleman of

a grave and respectable deportment, clad in black doublet and hosen, sat on a stone-heap at the head, from whence he dealt out the delicacies with due care and attention. This was a mortifying sight to an hungry stomach, and Robin's humanity yearned at the display. After the first emotions had a little subsided, he found himself at leisure to examine the faces of the opposite guests, and he recognised several dames of his acquaintance, feasting right merrily at the witches' board. Either his fears and "thick-coming fancies" deceived him, or, as he afterwards declared, he saw nearly the whole of the neighbourhood at the assembly.

Presently it seemed as if the first course were ended, and the floor cleared by invisible hands in a twinkling.

"Now pull," said the grave personage in black.

Many ropes hung from the roof. These the women began to pull furiously, when down came pies, puddings, milk, cream, and rare wines, which they caught in wooden bowls; likewise sweetmeats and all manner of dainties, which made Robin's mouth to water so at the sight, that he could bear it no longer. Intending to groan, he involuntarily uttered a loud neigh, which so alarmed the company that the lights were extinguished, and the guests sallied out, each immediately bestriding her steed, and setting forth at full gallop, save Goody Dickisson, who, in attempting to mount Robin, met with a sore mishap. Recollecting the charm which had operated upon him, he gave his head a sudden fling: as good luck would have it, the bridle became entangled about her neck. His speech now came again, and he cried out,—

"Mare, mare, see thou be;
And where I point thee, carry me."

Suddenly she was metamorphosed, and Robin, in his turn, bestrode the witch. He spared her not, as will readily be imagined, until he had her safe in her own stable before break of day. Leaving her there with the bridle about her neck, he entered the house, hungry and jaded. Soon he heard Giles coming down stairs in a great hurry,—

"How now, sirrah!" cried the incensed miller:—"did I not tell thee to forbid thy mistress the mare?"

"Why, master," replied Robin, scratching his head, "and so I have:—the beast hasna' been ridden sin' ye backed her on Friday."

"Thou art a lying hound to look me in the face and say so. Thy mistress hath been out again last night upon her old errands—I found it out when I awaked."

"And what's the matter of that?" said Robin, with great alacrity. "Ye may go see, master, an' ye liken;—the mare's as dry as our meal-tub, and as brisk as bottled ale."

Giles turned angrily away from him towards the stable, tightening a tough cudgel in his grasp, with which he intended to belabour the unfortunate hind on his return. Nor was he long absent:—Robin had scarcely swallowed a mouthful of hot porridge, when his master thus accosted him:—

"Why, thou hob-thrust, no good can come where thy fingers are a-meddling;—there is another jade besides mine own tied to the rack, not worth a groat. Dost' let thy neighbours lift my oats and provender? Better turn my mill into a spital for horses, and nourish all the worn-out kibboes i' the parish!"

"Nay, measter, the beast is yours; and ye ha' foun' her bed and provender these twenty years."

"I'll cudgel that lying spirit out o' thee," said Giles, wetting his hands for a firm grasp at the stick.

"Hold, master!" said Robin, stepping aside: "she has cost you more currying than all the combs in the stable are worth. Step in and take off the bridle, and then say whose beast she is, and who hath most right to her, you or your neighbours. But mind, when the bridle is off her neck, she slip it not on to yours; for if she do, you are a gone man."

Giles staid not, but ran with great haste into the stable. The tired beast could scarcely stand; but he pulled off the bridle, and—as Robin told the tale—his own spouse immediately stood confessed before him!

Here we pause. In the next part we shall rapidly sketch another of the traditions current on this strange subject. It will but be a brief and shadowy outline;—space forbids us to dilate: the whole volume would not contain the stories that tradition attributes to the prevalence of this unnatural and revolting, though, it may be, imaginary crime.

PART SECOND.

On the verge of the Castle Clough, a deep and winding dingle, once shaded with venerable oaks, are the small remains of the Castle of Hapton, the seat of its ancient lords, and, till the erection of Hapton Tower, the occasional residence of the De la Leghs and Townleys. Hapton Tower is now destroyed to its foundation. It was a large square building, and about a hundred years ago presented the remains of three cylindrical towers with conical basements. It also appears to have had two principal entrances opposite to each other, with a thorough lobby between, and seems not to have been built in the usual form,—that of a quadrangle. It was erected about the year 1510, and was inhabited until 1667. The family-name of the nobleman—for such he appears to have been—of whom the following story is told, we have no means of ascertaining. That he was an occasional resident or visitor at the Tower is but surmise. During the period of these dark transactions, we find that the mansion was inhabited by Jane Assheton, relict of Richard Townley, who died in the year 1637. Whoever he might be, the following horrible event, arising out of this super-

stition, attaches to his memory. Whether it can be attributed to the operations of a mind just bordering on insanity, and highly wrought upon by existing delusions, —or must be classed amongst the proofs, so abundantly furnished by all believers in the reality of witchcraft and demoniacal possession, our readers must determine as we unfold the tale.

Lord William had seen, and had openly vowed to win, the proud maiden of Bernshaw Tower. He did win her, but he did not woo her. A dark and appalling secret was connected with their union, which we shall briefly develope.

Lady Sibyl, "the proud maiden of Bernshaw," was, from her youth, the creature of impulse and imagination —a child of nature and romance. She roved unchecked through the green valleys and among the glens and moorlands of her native hills:—every nook and streamlet was associated with some hidden thought, "too deep for tears," until Nature became her god,—the hills and fastnesses, the trackless wilds and mountains, her companions. With them alone she held communion; and, as she watched the soft shadows and the white clouds take their quiet path upon the hills, she beheld in them the symbols of her own ideas,—the images and reflections,—the hidden world within her made visible. She felt no sympathy with the realities—the common-places of life:—her thoughts were too aspiring for earth, yet found not their resting-place in Heaven! It was no grovelling, degrading superstition which actuated her:—she sighed for powers above her species,—she aspired to hold intercourse with beings of a superior nature. She would gaze for hours in wild delirium on the blue sky and starry vault, and wish

she were freed from the base encumbrances of earth, that she might shine out among those glorious intelligences in regions without a shadow or a cloud. Imagination was her solace and her curse:—she flew to it for relief as the drunkard to his cup, sparkling and intoxicating for a while, but its dregs were bitterness and despair. Soon her world of imagination began to quicken; and, as the wind came sighing through her dark ringlets, or rustling over the dry grass and heather bushes at her side, she thought a spirit spoke, or a celestial messenger crossed her path. The unholy rites of the witches were familiar to her ear; but she spurned their vulgar and low ambition—she panted for communion with beings more exalted—demi-gods and immortals, of whom she had heard as having been translated to those happier skies, forming the glorious constellations she beheld. Sometimes fancies wild and horrible assaulted her;—she then shut herself for days in her own chamber, and was heard as though in converse with invisible things. When freed from this hallucination, agony was marked on her brow, and her cheek was more than usually pale and collapsed. She would then wander forth again:—the mountain-breeze re-animated her spirits, and imagination again became pleasant unto her. She heard the wild swans winging their way above her, and she thought of the wild hunters and the spectre-horseman:*—the short wail of the

* In Lancashire these noises are called the Gabriel Ratchets, according to Webster, which seem to be the same with the German Rachtvogel or Rachtraven. The word and the superstition are still prevalent. Gabriel Ratchets are supposed to be like the sound of puppies yelping in the air, and to forebode death or misfortune.

curlew, the call of the moor-cock and plover, was the voice of her beloved. To her all nature wore a charmed life:—earth and sky were but creatures formed for her use, and the ministers of her pleasure.

The Tower of Bernshaw was a small, fortified house in the pass over the hills from Burnley to Todmorden. It stood within a short distance from the Eagle Crag; and the Lady Sibyl would often climb to the utmost verge of that overhanging peak, looking from its dizzy height until her soul expanded, and her thoughts took their flight through those dim regions where the eye could not penetrate.

One evening she had lingered longer than usual: she felt unwilling to depart,—to meet again the dull and wearisome realities of life,—the petty cares that interest and animate mankind. She loathed her own form and her own species:—earth was too narrow for her desire, and she almost longed to burst its barriers. In deep agony of her spirit, she cried aloud,—

"Would that my path, like yon clouds, were on the wind, and my dwelling-place in their bosom!"

A soft breeze came suddenly towards her, rustling the dry heath as it swept along. The grass bent beneath its footsteps, and it seemed to die away in articulate murmurs at her feet. Terror crept upon her, her bosom thrilled, and her whole frame was pervaded by some subtle and mysterious influence.

"Who art thou?" she whispered, as though to some invisible agent. She listened, but there was no reply:—the same soft wind suddenly arose, and crept to her bosom.

"Who art thou?" she enquired again, but in a louder

tone. The breeze again flapped its wings, mantling upwards from where it lay, as if nestled on her breast. It mounted lightly to her cheek, but it felt hot—almost scorching;—when the maiden again cried out as before. It fluttered on her ear, and she thought there came a whisper,—

"I am thy good spirit."

"Oh, tell me," she cried with vehemence:—"show me who thou art!"—A mist curled round her, and a lambent flame, like the soft lightning of a summer's night, shot from it. She saw a form, glorious but indistinct, and the flashes grew paler every moment.

"Leave me not," she cried;—"I will be thine!"

Then the cloud passed away, and a being stood before her, mightier and more stately than the sons of men. A burning fillet was on his brow, and his eyes glowed with an ever-restless flame.

"Maiden, I come at thy wish. Speak!—what is thy desire?"

"Let thought be motion;—let my will only be the boundary of my power," said she, nothing daunted; for her mind had become too familiar with invisible fancies, and her ambition too boundless, to feel either awe or alarm. Immediately she felt as though she were sweeping through the trackless air,—she heard the rush of mighty wings cleaving the sky,—she thought the whole world lay at her feet, and the kingdoms of the earth moved on like a mighty pageant. Then did the vision change. Objects began to waver and grow dim, as if passing through a mist; and she found herself again upon that lonely crag, and her conductor at her side. He grasped her hand:—she felt his burning touch, and a sudden smart as though

she were stung,—a drop of blood hung on her finger. He unbound the burning fillet, and she saw, as though it were a glimpse of that unquenchable, unconsuming flame that devoured him. He took the blood, and wrote upon her brow. The agony was intense, and a faint shriek escaped her. He spoke, but the sound rung in her ears, like the knell of hopes for ever departed.

For words of such presumptuous blasphemy, tradition must be voiceless. The demon looked upwards; but, as if blasted by some withering sight, his eyes were suddenly withdrawn.

* * * * *

What homage was exacted, let no one seek to know.

After a pause, the deceiver again addressed her; and his form changed as he spoke.

"One day in the year alone thou shalt be subject to mischance. It is the feast of All-Hallows, when the witches meet to renew their vows. On this night thou must be as they, and must join their company. Still thou mayest hide thyself under any form thou shalt choose; but it shall abide upon thee until midnight. Till then thy spells are powerless. On no other day shall harm befall thee."

The maiden felt her pride dilate:—her weak and common nature she thought was no longer a degradation; she seemed as though she could bound through infinite space. Already was she invested with the attributes of immateriality, when she awoke!—and in her own chamber, whither the servants had conveyed her from the crag an hour before, having found her asleep, or in a swoon, upon the verge of the precipice. She looked at her hand, the sharp wound

was there; and she felt her brow tingle as if to remind her of that irrevocable pledge.

Lord William sued in vain to the Maid of Bernshaw Tower. She repulsed him with scorn and contumely. He vowed that he would win her, though the powers of darkness withstood the attempt. To accomplish this impious purpose, he sought Mause, the witch's dwelling. It was a dreary hut, built in a rocky cleft:—shunned by all as the abode of wicked and malignant spirits, which the dame kept and nursed as familiars, for the fulfilment of her malicious will.

The night was dark and heavy, when Lord William tied his steed to a rude gate that guarded the entrance to the witch's den. He raised the latch, but there was no light within.

"Holloa," cried the courageous intruder; but all was dark and silent as before. Just as he was about to depart, he thought he heard a rustling near him, and presently the croaking voice of the hag close at his ear.

"Lord William," said she, "thou art a bold man to come hither after night-fall."

He felt something startled, but he swerved not from his purpose.

"Canst' help me to a bride, mother Helston?" cried he, in a firm voice; "for I feel mightily constrained to wed!"

"Is the doomed maiden of Bernshaw a bride fit for Lord William's bosom?" said the invisible sorceress.

"Give me some charm to win her consent,—I care not for the rest."

"Charm!" replied the beldame, with a screech that made Lord William start back. "Spells have I none

that can bind her. I would she were in my power:—but she hath spell for spell. Nought would avail thee, for she is beyond my reach;—her power would baffle mine!"

"Is she, too, tainted with the iniquity that is abroad?"

"I tell thee, yea; and my spirit must bow to hers. Wouldst wed her now—fond, feeble-hearted mortal?"

Lord William was silent; but the beautiful form of the maiden seemed to pass before him, and he loved her with such overmastering vehemence, that if Satan himself had stood in the gap he would not have shrunk from his purpose.

"Mause Helston," said the lover, "if thou wilt help me at this bout, I will not draw back. I dare wed her though she were twice the thing thou fearest. Tell me how her spell works,—I will countervail it,—I will break that accursed charm, and she shall be my bride!"

For a while there was no reply; but he heard a muttering as though some consultation were going on.

"Listen, Lord William," she spoke aloud. "Ay, thou wilt listen to thine own jeopardy! Once in the year—'t is on the night of All-Hallows—she may be overcome. But it is a perilous attempt!"

"I care not. Point out the way, and I will ride it rough-shod!"

The beldame arose from her couch, and struck a light. Ere they separated, the morning dawned high above the grey hills. Many rites and incantations were performed, of which we forbear the disgusting recital. The instructions he received were never divulged;—the secrets of that night were never known: but an altered man was Lord William when he came back to Hapton Tower.

On All-Hallows' day, with a numerous train, he went forth a hunting. His hounds were the fleetest from Calder to Calder; and his horns the shrillest through the wide forests of Accrington and Rossendale. But on that morning a strange hound joined the pack, that outstripped them all.

"Blow," cried Lord William, "till the loud echoes ring, and the fleet hounds o'ertake yon grizzled mongrel."

Both horses and dogs were driven to their utmost speed, but the strange hound still kept a-head. Over moor and fell they still rushed on, the hounds in full cry, though, as yet, guided only by the scent, the object of their pursuit not being visible. Suddenly a white doe was seen, distant a few yards only, and bounding away from them at full speed. She might have risen out of the ground, so immediate was her appearance. On they went, in full view, but the deer was swift, and she seemed to wind and double with great dexterity. Her bearing was evidently towards the steep crags on the east. They passed the Tower of Bernshaw, and were fast approaching the verge of that tremendous precipice, "The Eagle Crag." Horse and rider must inevitably perish if they follow. But Lord William slackened not in the pursuit; and the deer flew straight as an arrow to its mark,—the very point where the crag jutted out over the gulf below. The huntsmen drew back in terror; the dogs were still in chase, though at some distance behind;—Lord William only and the strange hound were close upon her track. Beyond the crag nothing was visible but cloud and sky, shewing the fearful height and abruptness of the descent. One moment and the gulf must be shot: his brain felt dizzy, but his heart was resolute.

"Mause, my wench," said he, "my neck or thine!—Hie thee; if she 's over, we are lost!"

Lord William's steed followed in the hound's footsteps to a hair. The deer was almost within her last spring, when the hound, with a loud yell, doubled her, scarcely a yard's breadth from the long bare neb of that fearful peak, and she turned with inconceivable speed, so near the verge, that Lord William, in wheeling round, heard a fragment of rock, loosened by the stroke from his horse's hoof, roll down the precipice with a frightful crash. The sudden whirl had nearly brought him to the ground, but he recovered his position with great adroitness. A loud shriek announced the capture. The cruel hound held the deer by the throat, and they were struggling together on the green earth. With threats and curses, he lashed away the ferocious beast, who growled fiercely at being driven from her prey. With looks of sullenness and menace, she scampered off, leaving Lord William to secure the victim. He drew a silken noose from his saddle-bow, and threw it over the panting deer, who followed quietly on to his dwelling at Hapton Tower.

At midnight there was heard a wild and unearthly shriek from the high turret, so pitiful and shrill, that the inmates awoke in great alarm. The loud roar of the wind came on like a thunder-clap. The tempest flapped its wings, and its giant arms rocked the turret like a cradle. At this hour Lord William, with a wild and haggard eye left his chamber. The last stroke of the midnight bell trembled on his ear as he entered the western tower. A maiden sat there, a silken noose was about her head, and she sobbed loud and heavily. She wrung her white hands at his approach.

"Thy spells have been o'ermastered. Henceforth, I renounce these unholy rites:—I would not pass nights of horror and days of dread any longer. Maiden, thou art in my power. Unless thou wilt be mine,—renouncing thine impious vows,—for ever shunning thy detested arts,—breaking that accursed chain the enemy has wound about thee,—I will deliver thee up to thy tormentors, and those that seek thy destruction. This done, and thou art free."

The maiden threw her snake-like glance upon him.

"Alas," she cried, "I am not free. This magic noose! remove it, and my promise shall be without constraint."

"Nay, thou arch-deceiver,—deceiver of thine own self, and plotter of thine own ruin,—I would save thee from thy doom. Promise, renounce, and for ever forswear thy vows. The priest will absolve thee:—it must be done ere I unbind that chain."

"I promise," said the maiden, after a deep and unbroken silence. "I have not been happy since I knew their power. I may yet worship this fair earth, and yon boundless sky.—This heart would be void without an object and a possession!"

She shed no tear until the holy man, with awful and solemn denunciations, exorcised the unclean spirit to whom she was bound. He admonished her, as a repentant wanderer from the flock, to shun the perils of presumption, reminding her, that HE, of whom it is written, that he was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be *tempted* of the devil,—HE who won for us the victory in that conflict, taught *us* in praying to say, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." She was re-baptized as one newly born, and committed again to the keeping

of the Holy Church. Shortly afterwards were united at the altar Lord William and Lady Sibyl. He accompanied her to Bernshaw Tower, their future residence—becoming, in right of his wife, the sole possessor of those domains.

PART THIRD.

TWELVE months were nigh come and gone, and the feast of All-Hallows was again at hand. Lord William's bride sat in her lonely bower, but her face was pale, and her eyes red with weeping. The tempter had been there; and she had not sought for protection against his snares. That night she was expected to renew her allegiance to the prince of darkness. Those fearful rites must now bind her for ever to his will. Such appeared to be her infatuation, that it led her to imagine she was yet his by right of purchase, without being fully conscious of the impiety of that thought. His own power had been promised to her: true, she must die; but might she not, a spirit like himself, rove from world to world without restraint? She thought,—so perilously rapid was her relapse and her delusion,—that his form had again passed before her, beautiful as before his transgression:—"The Son of the Morning!"—arrayed in the majesty which he had before the world was,—ere heaven's Ruler had hurled him from his throne. Her mental vision was perverted. Light and darkness, good and evil, were no longer distinguished. Perhaps it was a dream,—but the imagination had become

diseased, and she distinguished not its inward operations from outward impressions on the sense. Her husband was kind, and loved her with a lover's fondness, but she could not return his affection. He saw her unhappy, and he administered comfort; but the source of her misery was in himself, and she sighed to be free!

"Free!"—she started—the voice was an echo to her thought. It appeared to be in the chamber, but she saw no living form. She had vowed to renounce the devil and all his works, in her re-baptism, before she was led to the altar—and how could she face her husband?

"He shall not know of our compact."

These words seemed to be whispered in her ear. She turned aside; but saw nothing save the glow of sunset through the lattice, and a wavering light upon the floor.

"I would spare him this misery," she sighed. "Conceal but the secret from him, and I am again thine!"

Suddenly the well-known form of her familiar was at her side.

The following day was All-Hallows-e'en, and her allegiance must be renewed in the great assembly of his subjects held on that fearful night.

It was in the year 1632; a period well known in history, as having led to the apprehension of a considerable number of persons accused of witchcraft. The depositions of those miserable creatures were taken before Richard Shuttleworth and John Starkie, two of his Majesty's justices of the peace, on the 10th of February, 1633; and they were committed to Lancaster Castle for trial.

Seventeen of them were found guilty, on evidence suspious enough under ordinary circumstances, but not at

all to be wondered at, if we consider the feeling and excitement then abroad. Some of the deluded victims themselves confessed their crime, giving minute and connected statements of their meetings, and the transactions which then took place. Justices of the peace, judges, and the highest dignitaries of the realm, firmly believed in these reputed sorceries. Even the great Sir Thomas Brown, author of the book intended as an exposure of "Vulgar Errors," gave his testimony to the truth and reality of those diabolical delusions. But we have little need to wonder at the superstition of past ages, when we look at the folly and credulity of our own.

It may, perhaps, be pleasing to learn that the judge who presided at the trial respited the convicts, and reported their case to the King in council. They were next remitted to Chester, where Bishop Bridgeman certifying his opinion of the matter, four of the accused, Margaret Johnson, Frances Dickisson, Mary Spencer, and the wife of one Hargreaves, were sent to London and examined, first by the King's physicians, and afterwards by Charles I. in person. "A stranger scene can scarcely be conceived," says the historian of Whalley; "and it is not easy to imagine whether the untaught manners, rude dialect, and uncouth appearance of these poor foresters would more astonish the King; or his dignity of person and manners, together with the splendid scene by which they were surrounded, would overwhelm them."

The story made so much noise, that plays were written on the subject, and enacted. One of them is entitled, "The late Lancashire Witches, a well-received Comedy, lately acted at the Globe on the Bank-side, by the King's Majesty's Actors. Written by Thomas Hay-

wood and Richard Broom. *Aut prodesse solent, aut delectare,* 1634."

But our element is tradition, especially as illustrating ancient manners and superstitions; we therefore give the sequel of our tale as tradition hath preserved it.

Giles Dickisson, the merry miller at the Mill-clough, had so taken to heart his wife's dishonesty, that, as we have before observed, he grew fretful and morose. His mill he vowed was infested with a whole legion of these "hell-cats," as they were called; for in this shape they presented themselves to the affrighted eyes of the miserable yoke-fellow, as he fancied himself, to a limb of Satan. The yells and screeches he heard o' nights from these witches and warlocks were unbearable; and once or twice, when late at the mill, both he and Robin had received some palpable tokens of their presence. Scratches and bloody marks were plainly visible, and every hour brought with it some new source of annoyance and alarm.

One morning, Giles showed himself with a disconsolate face before Lord William at the Tower—he could bear his condition no longer.

"T' other night," said he, "the witches set me astride o' t' riggin' o' my house.* It was a bitter cold time, an' I was nearly perished when I wakened. I am weary of my

* "Riggin" or ridging. The hills which divide the counties of York and Lancaster are sometimes called "th' riggin," from their being the highest land between the two seas, forming part of what is called the back-bone of England. An individual, residing at a place named "The Summit," from its situation, was asked where he lived, "I live at th' riggin o' th' warld, I reckon," says he; "for th' water fro' t' one side o' th' roof fa's to th' east sea, an' t' other to th' west sea."

life, and will flit; for this country, the de'il, I do think, holds in his own special keeping!"

Then Robin stept forward, offering to take the mill on his master's quittance. He cared not, he said, for all the witch-women in the parish. He had "fettled" one of them, and, by his Maker's help, he hoped fairly to drive them off the field. The bargain was struck, and Robin that day entered into possession.

By a strange coincidence, this transaction happened on the eve of All-Hallows before mentioned; and Lord William requested that Robin would, on that night, keep watch. His courage, he said, would help him through; and if he could rid the mill of them, the Baron promised a year's rent, and a good largess beside. Robin was fain of the offer, and prepared himself for the strife; determined, if possible, to eject these ugly vermin from the premises.

On this same night, soon after sunset, the Lady of Bernshaw Tower went forth, leaving her lord in a deep sleep, the effect, as it was supposed, of her own spells. Ere she departed, every symbol or token of grace was laid aside;—her rosary was unbound. She drew a glove from her hand, and in it was the bridal ring, which she threw from her,—when the flame of the lamp suddenly expired. It was in her little toilet-chamber, where she had paused, that she might pursue her meditations undisturbed. Her allegiance must be renewed, and revoked no more; but her pride, that darling sin for which she risked her soul, must first suffer. On that night she must be guided by the same laws, and subjected to the same degrading influence as her fellow-subjects. At least once a year this condition must be fulfilled:—all rank and distinction being lost, the vassals were alike equal in subordination to their

chief. On this night, too, the rites of initiation were usually administered.

The time drew nigh, and the Lady Sibyl, intending to conceal the glove with the sacred symbol, passed her hand on the table where it had lain—but it was gone!

* * *

In a vast hollow, nearly surrounded by crags and precipices, bare and inaccessible, the meeting was assembled, and the Lady of the Tower was to be restored to their communion. Gliding like a shadow, came in the wife of Lord William,—pale, and her tresses dishevelled, she seemed the victim either of disease or insanity.

Under a tottering and blasted pine sat their chief, in a human form; his stature lofty and commanding, he appeared as a ruler even in this narrow sphere of his dominion. Yet he looked round with a glance of mockery and scorn. He was fallen—and he felt degraded; but his aim was to mar the glorious image of his Maker, and trample it beneath his feet.

A crowd of miserable and deluded beings came at the beck of their chief, each accompanied by her familiar. But the Lady of Bernshaw came alone. Her act of renouncement had deprived her of this privilege.

The mandate having been proclaimed, and the preliminary rites to this fearful act of reprobation performed, the assembly waited for the concluding act—the cruel and appalling trial: one touch of his finger was to pass upon her brow,—the impress, the mark of the beast,—the sign that was to snatch her from the reach of mercy. Her spirit shuddered;—nature shrunk from the unholy contact. Once more she looked towards that heaven she was about to forfeit,—and for ever!

"For ever!"—The words rung in her ears; their sound was like the knell of her everlasting hope. She started aside, as though she felt a horrid and scorching breath upon her cheek, as though she already felt their unutterable import in the abysses of woe!

Conscience, long slumbering, seemed to awake; she was seized with the anguish of despair! It seemed as though judgment were past, and she was doomed to wander like some rayless orb in the blackness of darkness for ever. One fearful, undefined form of terror was before her; one consciousness of offence ever present; all idea of past and future absorbed in one ever-during NOW, she felt that her misery was too heavy to sustain. A groan escaped her lips, but it was an appeal to that Power for deliverance, who is not slow to hear, "nor impotent to save." Suddenly she was roused from some deep and overpowering hallucination; the promises of unlimited gratification to every wish prevailed no more,—the tempter's charm was broken. All was changed; the whole scene seemed to vanish; and that form, which once appeared to her like an angel of light, fell prostrate, writhing away in terrific and tortuous folds on the hissing earth. The crowd scattered with a fearful yell;—she heard a rush of wings, and a loud and dissonant scream,—and "the Bride of Bernshaw" fell senseless to the ground.

We leave the conscience-stricken victim, whilst we relate the result of Robin's watch-night at the mill.

He lay awake until midnight—but there was no disturbance—nothing was heard but the plash of the mill-stream, and the dripping ooze from the rocks. His old enemies, no doubt, were intimidated, and he was about

commencing a snug nap on the idea—when, lo!—there came a great rush of wind. He heard it booming on from a vast distance, until it seemed to sweep over the building in one wide resistless torrent that might have levelled the stoutest edifice;—yet was the mill unharmed by the attack. Then came shrieks and yells mingled with the most horrid imprecations. Swift as thought, there rushed upon him a prodigious company of cats, bats, and all manner of hideous things, that scratched and pinched him, as he afterwards declared, until his flesh verily "reeked" again. Maddened by the torment, he began to lay about him lustily with a long whittle which he carried for domestic purposes. They gave back at so unexpected a reception. Taking courage thereby, Robin followed, and they fled, helter-skelter, like a routed army. Through loop-holes and windows went the obscene crew, with such hideous screeches as startled the whole neighbourhood. He gave one last desperate lunge as a parting remembrance, and felt that a weapon had made a hit. Something fell on the floor, but the light was extinguished in the scuffle, and in vain he attempted to grope out this trophy of his valour.

"I've sliced off a leg or a wing," thought he, "and I may lay hold on it in the morning."

All was now quiet, and Robin, to his great comfort, was left without further molestation.

Morning dawned bright and cheerful on the grey battlements of Bernshaw Tower; the sun came out joyously over the hills; but Lord William walked forth with an anxious and gloomy countenance. His wife had feigned illness, and the old nurse had tended her through the night in a separate chamber. This was the story he had

learnt on finding her absent when she awoke. Early presenting himself at the door, he was refused admission. She was ill—very ill. The lady was fallen asleep, and might not be disturbed:—such was the answer he received. Rising over the hill, he now saw the gaunt ungainly form of Robin, his new tenant, approaching in great haste with a bundle under his arm.

"What news from the mill, my stout warrior of the north?" said Lord William.

"I think I payed one on 'em, your worship," said Robin, taking the bundle in his hand:—"not a cat said mew when they felt my whittle. Marry, I spoilt their caterwauling: I've cut a rare shive!"

"How did'st fare last night with thy wenches?" enquired the other!

"I've mended their manners for a while, I guess. As I peeped about betimes this morning, I found—a paw! If cats are bred with hands, and gowden rings on their fingers, they shall e'en ha' sporting-room i' the mill!—No bad luck, methinks."

Robin uncovered the prize, and drew out a bleeding hand, mangled at the wrist and blackened as if by fire; one finger decorated with a ring, which Lord William too plainly recognised. He seized the terrific pledge, and, with a look betokening some deadly purpose, hastened to his wife's chamber. He demanded admittance in too peremptory a tone for denial. His features were still; not a ripple marked the disturbance beneath. He stood with a calm and tranquil brow by her bed-side; but she read a fearful message in his eye.

"Fair lady, how farest thou?—I do fear me thou art ill!"

"She's sick, and in great danger. You may not disturb her, my lord," said the nurse, attempting to prevent his too near approach:—"I pray you depart; your presence afflicts her sorely."

"Ay, and so it does," said Lord William, with a strange and hideous laugh. "I pray thee, lady, let me play the doctor:—hold out thy hand."

The lady was still silent. She turned away her head:—his glance was too withering to endure.

"Nay, then, I must constrain thee, dame."

She drew out her hand, which Lord William seized with a violent and convulsive grasp.

"I fear me 't is a sickness unto death; small hope of amendment here. Give me the other,—perchance I may find there more comfort."

"Oh, my husband, I cannot:—I am—I have no strength."

"Why, thou art grown peevish with thy distemper. Since 't is so, I must e'en force thy stubborn will."

"Alas! I cannot."

"If not thy hand, shew me thy wrist!—I have here a match to it, methinks. Oh, earth,—earth,—hide me in thy womb!—let the darkness blot me out and this blasting testimony for ever!—Accursed hag, what hast thou done?"

He seized her by the hair.

"What hast thou promised the fiend? Tell me,—or——"

"I have—oh, I fear I have consented to the compact!"

"How far doth it bind thee?"

"My soul—my better part!"

"Thy better part!—Thy worse,—a loathsome ulcer, reeking with the stench from the pit!—Better have given thy body to the stake, than have let in one unhallowed desire upon thy soul. How far does thy contract reach?"

"All interest I can claim. His part that created it I could not give, not being mine to yield."

"Lost—lost! Thou hast, indeed, sold thyself to perdition. I'll purge this earth of witchery:—I'll make their carcasses my weapon's sheath. Hence, inglorious scabbard!"—He flung away the sheath. Twining her dark hair about his fingers,—

"Die—impious, polluted wretch!—This blessed earth loathes thee,—the grave's holy sanctuary will cast thee out. Yon glorious sun would smite thee, should I refrain!"

He raised his sword,—a gleam of triumph seemed to flash from her eye, as though she were eager for the blow; but the descending weapon was stayed, and by no timid hand.

Lord William turned, yet he saw not the cause of its restraint. The lady alone seemed to be aware of some unseen intruder, and her eye darkened with apprehension. Suddenly she sprung from the couch;—a shriek from no human agency escaped her, and the spirit seemed to have passed from its abode.

Lord William threw himself on her pale and inanimate form.

"Farewell!" he cried: "I had thought thee honest!—Nay, lost spirit, I must not say farewell!"

He gazed on his once-loved bride with a look of such unutterable tenderness, that the heart's deep gush burst

from his eyes, and he wept in that almost unendurable anguish. The sight was too harrowing to sustain. He was about to withdraw, when a convulsive tremour passed across her features,—a trembling like the undulation of the breeze rippling the smooth bosom of the lake:—a sigh seemed to labour heavily from her breast, her eyes opened; but as though yet struggling under the influence of some terrific dream, she cried,—

"Oh, save me,—save me!" She looked upwards: it was as if the light of heaven had suddenly shone in upon her benighted soul.

"Lost, saidst thou, accursed fiend?—Never, until His power shall yield to thine!"

Yet she shuddered, as though the appalling shadow were still upon her spirit.—"Nay, 't was but a dream."

"Dreams!" cried Lord William, recovering from a look of speechless amazement. "Thy dreams are more akin to truth than ever were thy waking reveries."

"Nay, my lord, look not so unkindly on me,—I will tell thee all. I dreamt that I was possessed, and this body was the dwelling of a demon. It was permitted as a punishment for my transgressions; for I had sought communion with the fiend. I was the companion of witches,—foul and abominable shapes;—a beastly crew, with whom I was doomed to associate. Hellish rites and deeds, too horrible to name, were perpetrated. As a witness of my degradation, methought my right hand was withered. I feel it still! Yet,—surely 't was a dream!"

She raised her hand, gazing earnestly on it, which, to Lord William's amazement, appeared whole as before, save a light mark round the wrist, but the ring was not there.

"What can this betide?" said the trembling sufferer. She looked suspiciously on this apparent confirmation of her guilt, and then upon her husband. "Oh, tell me that I did but dream!"

But Lord William spoke not.

"I know it all now!" she said, with a heavy sob. "My crime is punished; and I loathe my own form, for it is polluted. Yet the whole has passed but as some horrible dream,—and I am free! This tabernacle is cleansed; no more shall it be defiled; for to Thee do I render up my trust."

A mild radiance had displaced the wild and unnatural lustre of her eye, as she looked up to the Mercy she invoked, and was forgiven.

Her spirit was permitted but a brief sojourn in this region of sorrow. Ere another sun, her head hung lifeless on Lord William's bosom:—he had pressed her to his heart in token of forgiveness; but he held only the cold and clammy shrine,—the idol had departed!

According to the popular solution of this fearful mystery, a demon or familiar had re-animated her form while she lay senseless at the sudden and unlooked-for dissolution of the witches' assembly. In this shape the imp had joined the rendezvous at the mill, and fleeing from the effects of Robin's valour, maliciously hoped that Lord William would execute a swift vengeance on his erring bride. But his hand was stayed by another and more merciful power, and the demon was cast out.

The ring and glove were not found. It was said that Mause Helston had taken them as a gage of fealty, and dying about the same period was denied the rites of

Christian burial. Hence may have arisen the belief which tradition has preserved respecting the Lady Sibyl.

Popular superstition still alleges that her grave was dug where the dark "Eagle Crag" shoots out its cold bare peak into the sky. Often, it is said, on the eve of All-Hallows, do the hound and the milk-white doe meet on the crag,—a spectre huntsman in full chase. The belated peasant crosses himself at the sound, as he remembers the fate of

"THE WITCH OF BERNSHAW TOWER."

SIEGE OF LATHOM.

" Let me no longer live, she sayd,
Than to my lord I true remain;
My honour shall not be betray'd
Until I see my love again.

* * *

Oh! blame her not if she was glad
When she her lord again had seen.
Thrice welcome home, my dear, she said,—
A long time absent thou hast been:
The wars shall never more deprive
Me of my lord whilst I 'm alive."

MIRROUR FOR MARRIED WOMEN.

Engraved by Edwd Finden

BATHOM HOUSE.

built about the time above assigned from existing documents

LATHOM HOUSE.

No authentic drawing or representation of Lathom House, we believe, exists. The author has, however, had the temerity to present a restoration of this renowned edifice, as it appeared before the siege, and before "the sequestrators under Cromwell, weary of the slow disposal of the building-materials by sale, invited the peasants of the hundred of West Derby to take away the stones and timbers without any charge."

The very numerous documents to which he has had recourse, were aided by measurements, and a visit to the spot, where he found that a tolerably accurate idea might be formed of the situation and extent of the walls and towers, together with the main entrance, and the "great Eagle Tower."

The accompanying view is taken from a hill above the valley or trench, where, it is said, the main army of the besiegers was encamped. It is called in the neighbourhood, "Cromwell's trench," and the engraving may serve to convey some idea of that magnificent and princely dwelling, which, as the old ballad expresses it, would hold "two kinges, their traines and all." Henry the seventh, two

years after his visit to Lathom, restored his palace at Richmond, the same authority tells us, "like Lathom Hall in fashion." The gate-house in the engraving is drawn from the description of a carving of the Stanley legend in Manchester Collegiate Church, executed in the time of James Stanley, Bishop of Ely. From this it appears to have had two octagonal turrets on each side of an obtusely pointed or circular archway with battlements, machicolated and pierced for cannon.

The Eagle Tower alone remained when part of the estate was transferred to John Lord Ashburnham, on his marriage, in 1714, with Henrietta, daughter of William, ninth Earl of Derby. Lord Ashburnham sold it to a Furness, and he to Sir Thomas Bootle. Not a vestige now exists, and even the records of the family are destroyed. "Golforden," says Mr. Heywood, in his interesting Notes to a Journal of the Siege of Lathom, "along whose banks knights and ladies have a thousand times made resort, hearkening to stories as varied as those of Boccaccio;—the maudlin well, where the pilgrim and the lazar devoutly cooled their parched lips;—the mewing-house,—the training round,—every appendage to antique baronial state,—all now are changed, and a modern mansion and a new possessor fill the place."

SIEGE OF LATHOM.

THIS memorable siege, and the heroic defence by Lady Derby, though among the most prominent topics in the history of the county, supply but few materials which may not be found in records that already exist. Yet there are incidents connected with them which the historian has left unrecorded; occurrences, it might be, too trivial or too apocryphal for his pen. One of the main events in the following narrative,—though not found amongst written and authenticated records,—the author has listened to when a child, with a vigorous and greedy appetite for wonder—one of the earliest and most delightful exercises of the imagination.

We purpose to follow briefly the order of events as they appear in the several narratives to which we have had access, interweaving such traditionary matter as we have gathered in our researches; thereby interrupting and relieving the tediousness of this "thrice-told tale."

Lord Derby, from the usual unhappy fatality, or rather from the indecision and jealousies prevailing in his ma-

jesty's councils, had been commanded to leave the realm, and proceed instantly to the Isle of Man, at the precise time when his presence here would have been the most serviceable, not only from his great zeal, activity, and loyalty to his sovereign, but by reason of the influence he possessed, and the example which his noble and valiant bearing had shewn throughout the county. His house, children, and all other temporal concerns, he left to the care of his lady, first making provision, secretly, for their defence, supplying her with men, money, and ammunition, that she might not be unprepared in case of attack. His lordship's opinion of this disastrous and impolitic removal may be gathered from the following hasty expressions. After a perusal of the despatches, announcing the king's, or rather the queen's, pleasure that he should speedily repair to the Isle of Man, where an invasion was apprehended from the Scots,—speaking to the Lady Derby with more than ordinary quickness, he said, "My heart, my enemies have now their will, having prevailed with his majesty to order me to the Isle of Man, as a softer banishment from his presence and their malice."

This valiant and high-born dame was daughter to Claudè, Duke of Tremouille, and Charlotte Brabantin de Nassau, daughter of William, Prince of Orange, and Charlotte de Bourbon, of the royal house of France. By this marriage the Earl of Derby was allied to the French kings, the Dukes of Anjou, the Kings of Naples and Sicily, the Kings of Spain, and many other of the sovereign princes of Europe. Her father was a staunch Huguenot, and a trusty follower of Henry IV. That she did not sully the renown acquired by so illustrious a descent, the following narrative will abundantly prove.

It was at a special council of the Holy States,* held at Manchester, on Saturday, the 24th of February, 1644, that, after many former debates and consultations, the siege of Lathom was concluded upon. The parliament troops under Colonel Ashton of Middleton, Colonel Moore of Bank-Hall, and Colonel Rigby of Preston, on the same day began their march, proceeding by way of Bolton, Wigan, and Standish, under a pretence of going into Westmoreland, that the soldiers should not presently know of their destination.

Lathom, for magnificence and hospitality, was held in high reputation, assuming, in these respects, the attitude of a royal court in the northern parts of the kingdom; and the family were regarded with such veneration and esteem, that the following harmless inversion was familiar as "household words:"—"God save the Earl of Derby and the King:"—the general feeling and opinion thereby apparent being love to their lord, and loyalty to their prince.

On the 27th of February, the enemy took up their quarters about a mile distant from the house. The next day, Captain Markland was the bearer of a letter to her ladyship, from Sir Thomas Fairfax, commander-in-chief of the parliamentary forces, and likewise an ordinance of parliament: the one, requiring that she should surrender the house upon such honourable terms as he might propose; and the other, setting forth and commending the great mercy they had manifested, by thus offering to receive

* The name assumed by a body of men who met, during the wars, in Manchester; and who in energy and power were second only to their London brethren.

the Earl of Derby if he would submit himself. But she indignantly refused to surrender without the consent and commandment of her lord; and after many interviews, to which she assented only to gain time, and to complete the provisioning and fortifying of her little garrison, they began to find her answers too full of policy and procrastination, dangerous to the fidelity of their troops. In the end, seeing she was only amusing them by vain pretences, they sent the following, as their final terms, by Colonel Morgan, commander of the engineers, who had been appointed by Sir Thomas Fairfax to conduct the siege.

1st. "That the Countess of Derby shall have the time she desires, and then liberty to transport her arms and goods to the Isle of Man, except the cannon, which shall continue there for the defence of the house.

2d. "That her ladyship, by 10 o'clock on the morrow shall disband all her soldiers, except her menial servants, and receive an officer and forty parliament soldiers for her guard."

Morgan is described as a "little man, short and peremptory, who met with staidnes to coole his heat; and had the honor to carry backe this last answer—for her ladyshipp could scrue them to noe more delayes, viz.—

"That she refused all their articles, and was truely happy they had refused hers, protesting shee had rather hazard her life, than offer the like again;—

"That though a woman, and a stranger, divorced from her friends, and robb'd of her estate, she was ready to receive their utmost vyolence, trusting in God both for protection and deliverance."

The next morning they discovered the enemy had been at work about a musket shot from the house, in a sloping

ground, where they appeared to be forming a breast-work and trench to protect the pioneers,—multitudes of country people being every day forced into this laborious service.

The situation of Lathom deserves some notice, it being admirably calculated to resist any attack.

"It was encompassed by a strong wall, two yards thick; upon the walls were nine towers, flanking each other, and in every tower six pieces of ordnance, that played three one way and three another. Upon the tops of these towers were placed the best and choicest marksmen, who usually attended the earl in his sports, as huntsmen, keepers, fowlers, and the like, who continually kept watch, with screwed guns, and long fowling-pieces, to the great annoyance and loss of the enemy, especially of their commanders, who were frequently killed in the trenches. Without the wall, was a moat eight yards wide, and two yards deep: between the wall and the moat was a strong row of palisadoes. A high tower, called the Eagle Tower, stood in the midst surmounting all the rest. The gate-house had a strong tower on each side, forming the entrance to the first court."

The site of the house seemed to have been formed for a strong-hold, or place of safety; thus described by Seacome:—

"Before the house, to the south and south-west, is a rising ground, so near as to overlook the top of it, from which it falls so quick, that nothing planted against it on those sides can touch it further than the front wall; and on the north and east sides there is another rising ground, even to the edge of the moat."—"The situation of it may be compared to the palm of a man's hand, flat in

the middle, and covered with a rising ground, about it, and so near to it, that the enemy, in two years' siege, were never able to raise a battery against it, so as to make a breach in the wall practicable to enter the house by way of storm."*

It is said the camp of the besiegers was in a woody dell, near what is now called "The Round O Quarry," about half a mile from Lathom. This dell is still called "Cromwell's Trench;" and a large and remarkable stone, having two circular hollows or holes on its upper surface, evidently once containing nodules of iron, is called "Cromwell's stone,"—the country people supposing these holes were used as moles for casting balls during the siege.

The besiegers, however, thought to reduce the place by famine, being deceived through the following device of her ladyship's chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Rutter, a person whom the earl had left to her assistance, that she might be guided by his great skill and prudence:—

During one of the conferences before named, a captain of the parliamentary forces recognizing in the chaplain an old friend, with whom he had been educated, and very intimate and familiar aforetime, took a secret opportunity of addressing him, hoping to worm out her ladyship's secrets; conjuring him, by reason of their former friendship, to tell truly upon what ground or confidence she still refused these offers, seeing that it was impossible to defend her house against such a numerous and well-furnished army as was then encamped in the park.

Rutter, casting his eyes earnestly towards the ramparts,

* Hist. of the House of Stanley, p. 90.

bade his friend note their disposition and defence.—Her ladyship, as commander-in-chief, to prevent any sudden assault, and likewise to awe the enemy by these demonstrations, had disposed her soldiers in due order, so that they should be seen, under their respective officers, from the main-guard in the first court, down to the great hall, where they had left her ladyship's council. The rest of her forces she had placed upon the walls, and on the tops of the towers, in such manner that they might appear both numerous and well-disciplined.

"She is in nothing so desirous," said Rutter, "as that you should waste your strength and forces by a sudden assault, wherein you would not fail to have the worst of the battle: the place being armed at all points, as thou seest, and able to withstand any attack but that of famine."

A promise of secresy was exacted, when the wary chaplain pretended to unfold her ladyship's plans. He said there was but little provision in the place—that she was oppressed with the number of her soldiers—that she would not be able to subsist more than fourteen days; and she hoped to dare them to a sudden onset, not from her own confidence to give them a repulse, but knowing, that should they continue the siege, she must inevitably be forced to surrender.

The captain, after embracing his friend, and promising faithfully to maintain the secret, revealed, as Rutter intended he should, the whole of this confidential story to the enemy's council; who, giving credit to the tale, laid aside, for the present, all thoughts of an attack, and resolved to invest the place in a close and formal siege.

Fourteen days being expired, and they, supposing her

provisions were nigh spent, and the garrison reduced to the last extremity, sent another and more peremptory summons. But during this time her soldiers were training—the walls and fortifications were undergoing a thorough repair,—and the cannon properly served and mounted. The fortress, too, was well stocked, and even abundantly stored with provisions, in spite of their enemies, who kept a strict watch, but failed to detect the source and manner of the supply. She was not without hope, too, of relief from the king's troops, whom she daily expected to her assistance.

The besiegers finding themselves deceived,—their confidence abused, and their schemes only serving to the advantage of the opposite party,—orders were given, and preparations made, for more offensive measures, by drawing a line of circumvallation round the house.

The garrison consisted of 300 men, commanded by the Captains Henry Ogle, Edward Chisnall, Edward Rawsthorne, William Farmer, Mullineux Ratcliffe, and Richard Fox, assisted in their consultations by William Farrington, of Werden, Esq., who for executing the commission of array, and attending her ladyship in these troubles, had suffered the seizure of all his personal estate, and the sequestration of his lands.

There were 150 men each night upon the watch, with the exception of sixteen select marksmen out of the whole who all day kept the towers.

The besiegers' army was between two and three thousand, divided into tertias of seven or eight hundred men, who watched every third day and night. They were commanded by the Colonels Egerton, Ashton, Holland,

Rigby, Moore, and Morgan, with their captains and lieutenants.

After many warlike demonstrations, by which they hoped to intimidate the garrison, and after some days spent in fruitless endeavours to bring her ladyship, as they said, to a due sense of her condition, they sent one Captain Ashurst, "a fair and civil gentleman, of good character," with fresh proposals. But Lady Derby, justly considering these frequent treaties and debates were a discouragement to her men, implying weakness and a want of confidence in her resources, replied sharply—

"That no one should quit the house: but that she would keep it, whilst God enabled her, against all the king's enemies;—that, in brief, she would receive no more messages, but referred them to her lord, scorning their malice, and defying their assaults."

As the sequel of a business often depends upon the manner of its beginning, to second and confirm this answer, the next morning she ordered a sally, when Captain Farmer, with one hundred foot, and Lieutenant Kay, with twelve horse, their whole cavalry, went forth at different gates. Captain Farmer determining to take them by surprise, marched up to the enemies' works without firing a shot; then pouncing upon them suddenly in their trenches, he ordered a close and well-aimed volley, which quickly made them leave their holes in great disorder. Immediately, Lieutenant Kay, wheeling round with his horse, took them in flank, doing great execution as they fled. There were slain of the enemy about thirty men. The spoil was forty muskets, one drum, and six prisoners.

The retreat of this little band was skilfully secured by

Captain Ogle and Captain Rawsthorne, so that not one of the assailants was either slain or wounded.

The besiegers were much annoyed with devices, ingeniously contrived by the garrison to intimidate them, and hinder and injure their work. Hitherto they had not been able to cast up a mound for their ordnance, so harassed and occupied were they with these incessant alarms. But Rigby, on whom devolved the plan and conduct of the siege, seeing that their affairs were in no thriving condition, but that rather they were the scoff and jest of the garrison, who daily taunted them from the walls, determined at all hazards to raise his cannon. For this purpose, a considerable number of the peasantry and poorer sort in the neighbourhood, and for miles round, were driven like beasts to their daily work, labouring unremittingly at the mounds and trenches. At first they were sheltered by baskets and hurdles, afterwards by a testudo or wooden house, running upon wheels, and roofed with thick planks. Still many lives were lost in this desperate service. In the end they brought up one piece of cannon, amusing themselves like schoolboys at a holiday, in practising their harmless reports. The first shot struck the outer wall, but it was found proof. Afterwards, they aimed higher, intending to beat down a pinnacle or turret, but this also passed without damage. The last shot, which missed entirely, went over and beyond the buildings, burrowing in a field on the other side.

When they had performed this mighty feat, they sounded another parley, having, as they supposed, mightily beat down the hearts of the besieged. Colonel Rigby's chaplain then appeared at the gate with a letter, that Sir Thomas Fairfax had received from Lord Derby, who was now at Chester,

on his return from the Isle of Man. In this epistle he desired a free and honourable passage for his lady and their children, if she so pleased, being unwilling, as he said, to expose them to the uncertain hazard of a long siege. His lordship knew not, by reason of his long absence, either how his house was provided with ammunition and sustenance, or in what condition it might be, to withstand the attack. He was desirous that the garrison alone should bear the brunt, and that a defenceless woman and her children should be rescued from captivity.

Her ladyship replied, that she would communicate with the earl, and if he should then continue in the same opinion, she would willingly submit to his commands; but until this, she would neither yield up the house nor abate in her hostility, but would abide by the result. Immediately she dispatched to his lordship a messenger, conveying him from the house by a well-executed sally. The attempt succeeded; but whether he was suffered to reach his destination or not, we have no means of ascertaining. No answer was returned, though some days had elapsed, during which the enemy made many fruitless attempts to batter the walls.

They had now mounted the whole of their artillery, including their great mortar-piece, at that period looked upon as a most destructive engine, casting stones thirteen inches in diameter, and eighty pounds weight; likewise granadoes,—hollow balls of iron, filled with powder, and lighted by a fusee. These were dangerous intruders, calculated to produce great alarm and annoyance, as we shall find in the sequel. The mortar was planted only about half a musket shot from the walls, south-west, on a

rising ground, from whence the engineer commanded a view of the whole buildings.

The work on which it stood was orbicular, with a rampart of two yards and a half broad above the ditch. To lessen the destructive effects of this dangerous piece of artillery, chosen men were set as guards with wet hides and woollen coverlids to quench the flame, had the enemy been skilful enough to accomplish their purpose; it being their general opinion that to burn the house would be the most effectual means of subduing and driving out the garrison. But finding their endeavours met with no prosperous return, they bethought them to cast a show of religion over these attempts at robbery and rapine, issuing out commands to all men well affected towards their success, to co-operate with them for the overthrow of the "Babylonish harlot," by which term some worthy disciples of the visible church scrupled not to call the Lady of Lathom.*

The following proclamation was sent forth from their head-quarters at Ormskirk:—

"To all ministers and parsons in Lancashire, well-wishers to our successe against Lathom House, these:—

"Forasmuch as more than ordinary obstruco'ons have from the beginning of this p'sent service ag^t Lathom House interposed our proceedings, and yet still remaine, which cannot otherwise be removed, nor our successe furthered, but onely by devine assistance: it is, therefore,

* One of these sons of violence, Bradshaw of Brazen-nose, took occasion, before his patrons at Wigan, to profane the 14th verse of the 15th chapter of Jeremiah, from thence proving that Lady Derby was the scarlet whore and the whore of Babylon, whose walls he made as flat and thin as his own discourse.

our desires to the ministers and other well-affected persons of this county of Lancaster, in public manner, as they shall please, to com'end our case to God, that as wee are appoynted to the s^d employment, soe much tending to the settlem^t of our p'sent peace in theise parts, soe the Almighty would crowne our weake endeavours with speedy success in the said designe.

(Signed) "RALPH ASHTON,
"JOHN MOORE.

"Ormskirk, 5th April, 1644."

The four following days were, on their part, consumed in these unholy exercises; but the garrison, tired with inaction, resolved to awaken them, and turn their thoughts into a more profitable channel.

On Wednesday, the 10th of April, says the MS. journal, "about eleven o'clock, Capt^n Farmer and Capt^n Mullineux Rattcliffe, Lieu^t Penckett, Lieu^t Worrale, w^th 140 souldiers, sallyed out at a postern gate, beate the enemy from all theire worke and batteries, w^ch were now cast up round the house, nailed all theire canon, killed about 50 men, took 60 arms, one collours, and three drumes, in which acc'on, Capt^n Rattcliffe deserves this remembrance, that w^th 3 souldiers, the rest of his squadron being scattered w^th the execuc'on of the enemy, he cleared two sconces, and slew 7 men w^th his owne hand. Lieu^t Woorrall, ingageing himself in another worke among 50 of the enemy, bare the fury of all, till Capt^n Farmer relieved him, who, to the wonder of us all, came off without any dangerous wound.*—The sally-port was that day

* Plus animi est inferenti quam periculum propulsanti.—*Cæs. Com.*

warded by Cap$_n$ Chisnall, who with fresh men stood ready for succour of ours, had they been putt to the extremity; but they bravely marched round the works, and came in att the great gates, where Capt^n Ogle wth a p'ty of musketeers kept open the passage. Capt^n Rawstorne hadd the charge of the musketeers upon the walls, which hee plac'd to the best advantage to vex the enemy in their flight. Capt^n Fox, by a collours from the Eagle Tower, gave signall when to march and when to retreat, according to the motions of the enemy, which hee observed at a distance.—In all this service wee had but one man mortally wounded, and wee tooke onely one prisoner, an officer, for intelligence. In former sallyes some prisoners were taken, and by exchange releast, Colonel Aston and Rigby promising to sett at liberty as many of the king's friends, then prisoners in Lancaster, Manchester, Preston, and other places proposed by her ladishipp. But most unworthily they broke condic'ons, it suiting well with their religion, neither to observe faith with God nor men; and this occasioned a greater slaughter than either her lapp. or the captains desired, because we were in no condic'on to keepe prisoners, and knew the co'manders wold never release 'em but upon base or dishonorable terms."

Though their cannon had been injured in the spiking, yet were they not rendered useless; for the same night they "played a sacre twice," it is said, "to tell us they had cannon that wold speke, tho' our men had endeavoured to steele up all their lippes."

On the 15th, a grenado fell short of the house, in a walk near the chapel tower: some pieces of the shell, two inches thick, flew over the wall, and were gathered up by

the attendants. It was a mighty achievement to fire this unwieldy engine, requiring great labour and exertion to fill up its mouth when once it had vomited forth its malice. The day after, they loaded it with stones: to their great joy, Morgan and his bombardiers beheld one of them strike within the body of the house, it being always a matter of some uncertainty where the ball might spend itself. Indeed, it was said, in derision it might be, that sometimes their guns occasioned more damage to the besiegers than to the besieged.

Morgan now set to work, keeping, as accurately as he might, the head of the blatant beast to the same level, and loading it with a grenado. When the gunner had finished his task, and lighted the fusee, Morgan rubbed his hands for joy. Retiring sharply, off went the missile, with an explosion that shook the whole fabric. When the smoke was gone, they perceived some trifling damage in an old court, where the bomb, striking about half a yard into the earth, burst as it rose, much abated of its violence; yet it shook down some slight buildings near, but without hurting any one, save two women, who had their hands scorched as a memorial of their presence at the siege of Lathom.

This mortar-piece was like some mighty dragon of old, causing great terror in the minds of the soldiers, who knew not how to escape, but were in continual fear and watchfulness, dreading the assaults of this terrible monster. To allay their apprehensions, and to show their own indifference, the captains lodged in the uppermost rooms, behind clay walls, when not upon duty; and many other devices were resorted to for the purpose of encouraging their troops. One circumstance, however, seemed to renew

their courage: a gunner opposite, as he was mounting the rampart to see the success of his shot, was slain by a marksman from one of the towers. The next day one of their cannoneers was slain through the porthole by a skilful hand, which made the enemy more cautious than formerly. Yet did they not slacken their endeavours, but fired almost incessantly. On the Saturday afternoon, they played their mortar-piece five times; and in the night twice with stones, and once with a grenado, which, by the turning of the gunner, fell short of the house.

On Easter Monday and Tuesday, Colonel Rigby must needs gratify the country people with some pastime. He had already spent upwards of two thousand pounds, and his great pretensions were hitherto unfulfilled. Accordingly, he ordered his batteries to be directed against the Eagle Tower, which, as we have before seen, stood near the centre of the buildings, and was the place where Lady Derby and the children usually lodged.

"We will strike off a horn of the beast, or level one of her hills," said Rigby, as he strode forth early on that morning to the enterprise.

"Which seven towers be the seven hills of Rome, or spiritual Antichrist," said Jackson, his chaplain, who kept near his master, or rather kept his master between himself and the Babel that roused his indignation. Morgan was just preparing his engines, when Rigby approached, cautiously worming his way along the trenches, for the marksmen were become unmercifully expert by reason of continued practice.

The match was lighted,—when bounce went the shot, a four-and-twenty pounder, against the Eagle Tower.

"We will beat the old lady from her perch;—I find

she hath taken to high-roosting of late," said Morgan, as he watched the despatch and destination of his messenger.

The ball had entered into her ladyship's chamber, where she and the children were at breakfast. With as little emotion as Charles the Twelfth on a like occasion, she merely remarked, that since they were likely to have disagreeable intruders, she must e'en seek a new lodging.

"But," said she, rising with great dignity, "I will keep my house, while a building is left above my head."

This mischievous exploit, though an occasion, at the time, of great triumph and exultation to the besiegers, was the main cause of their subsequent expulsion and defeat.

We now purpose to follow out their operations with more minuteness, tracing the consequences of this action to its final result.

That same night, some of the garrison, having permission from their commanders, annoyed their enemies with strange and noisome alarms, during which they contrived to steal some powder, and other necessaries of which they were much in want.

Colonels Egerton and Rigby were in close counsel before their tent, when they beheld a terrible appearance moving towards them,—looking, in the dark, like the leaders of some mighty army, waving their torches to light them to the assault. This frightful apparition was a poor forlorn horse, studded with lights fastened to cords, that shook and flickered about in so fearful a manner. In this plight he had been turned out of the gates, the garrison looking on with frightful shouts and yells.

The sentinels ran from their posts, crying out that the king's army was coming. In an instant all was uproar and confusion, the trenches were cleared, and happy was he that came foremost in the rout.

Rigby clasped on his sword-belt, which he had doffed for the night. Springing on his horse he met some of the runaways, whom he forced back, hoping, by their means, to stem the main torrent. But, lo! in the very height of the panic, appeared another and more direful intruder—an avenue of fire seemed to extend from the walls to their own trench. It appeared as though the enemy had, by some unaccountable means, formed in a double line from the fortress, illuminated rank and file, as if by magic,—flinging their torches, by one simultaneous and well-concerted movement, into the air, with great order and regularity.

Had a legion from the puissant army of Beelzebub been approaching, their terror could not have been greater. Yet fear kept many from escaping, while they knew not which way to run for safety. Rigby, in the nick of time, galloped up to this awful and hostile appearance, crying out to his troops, that he would soon demolish the bugbear. This saying encouraged some of the runaways, who followed him to the combat. Approaching within a sword's length, for he was not deficient either in hardihood or valour, he made a furious stroke, right in the face of this flaming apparition, when down it fell, revealing its own harmlessness and their cowardice.

Taking advantage of the panic which followed the lighted horse, a few of the garrison had thrown a cord, covered with matches and other combustibles, round a tree, close to the enemy's camp; one end was fastened

near the walls, and the other was quickly carried back after being passed round the tree. The whole, on being lighted, was swung to and fro, producing the terrific appearance we have described.

Rigby was greatly mortified at this exploit; it seemed as though they were become the jest and laughing-stock of the garrison.

Morgan, at this moment, galloped up in great dudgeon. The enemy had found him a similar employment, he having twice bravely discharged his cannon, loaded with cartridge and chain-shot, against two lighted matches thrust into balls of clay that were thrown at him from the walls.

The leaders, provoked beyond measure, speedily assembled in council. Egerton, who had the most influence, from the beginning had urged milder measures, thinking to starve the enemy into submission; but Morgan, Rigby, and some others, were now red-hot for mischief, smarting from their late ridiculous disaster.

"And what have we gotten by delay?" said Rigby. "We have wearied our soldiers, wasted our powder, and emptied our purses; and this proud dame still beats and baffles us,—casting her gibes in our very teeth, which we deserve to lose for our pains."

"Take thine own course then," said Egerton mildly. "We are brethren, serving one cause only; the which, being best served, is best won."

"Then be to-morrow ours," said Morgan, with his usual heat and impatience. "We will burn them up like a heap of dry faggots. The house, though well fenced against our shot, hath yet much inward building of wood, and you shall see a pretty bonfire kindled by my bomb-shells,—a

roaring blaze that shall ride on the welkin between here and Beeston Castle!"

"Whilst thou art plying thy vocation, we will scale the walls, and the sword shall slay what the fire hath failed to devour," said Rigby.

"Fire and sword!" cried Egerton. "Ye are apt at a simile; but, methinks, these be your own similitudes."

"They give their prisoners no quarter," said Morgan; "and why should we sheathe the sword when a weapon is at our own throat?"

"Why doubtless they have more mouths to feed than they can conveniently supply," said the more pacific personage. "Living men, to keep them so, even though prisoners, require feeding."

"Our vengeance is sure, though tardy," said Rigby, rising in great choler. "The blood of these martyrs crieth from the ground. To-morrow!" and he breathed a bloody vow,—looking fiercely up to heaven in the daring and impious attitude of revenge.

"We had best give her ladyship another summons; which, if she refuse, her blood be upon her own head!" Saying this, Egerton abruptly left the council.

On the next morning, which was cold and drizzly, a "pragmatical" drummer went out from the nearer trench, beating his drum for a parley, lest his person should be dismissed without ceremony to the hungry kites.

Early had he been summoned to Rigby's lodging, where Ashton and Morgan were contriving a furious epistle to the contumacious defenders of their lives and substance. A summons, couched in no very measured terms, was drawn up, to the purport, that the fortress should be surrendered, and all persons, goods, arms, and munitions

therein, to the mercy of parliament; and by the next day, before two o'clock, her ladyship to return her answer, otherwise at her peril. Their valour grew hotter with the reading of this cruel message, which they secretly hoped and suspected she would refuse. The drum-major was called in, one Gideon Greatbatch by name,—a long, straight-haired, sallow-faced personage, of some note among the brethren for zeal and impiety. By this we mean that awful and profane use of Scripture phraseology, with which many of these gifted preachers affected to interlard their every-day discourse, attaching a ludicrous solemnity to matters the most trivial and unimportant.

In delineating this species of character, unfortunately not extinct in our own days, we do not hold it up to ridicule, but to reprehension. Irreverence and profanity, under whatever pretext, are without excuse, even beneath the mask of holy zeal and ardent devotion.

The man stalked in with little ceremony and less manners. He stood stiff and erect, the image of pride engendered by ignorance.

"'T is our last," said Rigby, folding up the message; "and if our arms are blessed, as we have hoped, and, it may be, unworthily deserved, ere the going down of to-morrow's sun, yon strong tower, wherein she trusteth, shall be as smoke; for the hope of the wicked shall perish."

"Yea, their idols shall fall down,—yea, their walls shall be as Jericho," said the drum-major, with a sing-song whine, to sanctify his blasphemous allusions,—"and shall utterly fall at the sound of ——"

"Thy two drumsticks, mayhap," returned Morgan, sharply; for this latter personage, though his presence

became needful in the camp, by reason of his reputed skill and bravery, was a great scandal to the real and conscientious professors,—of whom not a few had joined the ranks of the besiegers,—as well as the hypocritical and designing; some of whom did not hesitate to liken him to Achan and the accursed thing, by reason of which they were discomfited before their enemies.

"Thine ungodly speeches, Master Morgan, I would humbly trust, may not be as the fuel, that when the fire cometh, shall consume the camp, even the righteous with the wicked," said Gideon, as if shrinking from the contact of so unholy a personage.

Morgan replied not to this deprecation, save by swearing —covertly, though it might be—at the impudence and insubordination of these inferior agents, whose disorderly conduct it was necessary to connive at, while they were looked upon as saints and prophets—men from whose presence was impiously expected the blessing and protection of heaven.

A loud screaming was heard, and Rigby, darting a furious look through the door-way, ordered it to be closed.

"Another porker!" said he. "I verily think she hath provision behind the walls that would last out our siege till doomsday. There is treachery somewhere. Have we not heard, morning by morning, the self-same cry?"

"A whole herd of swine have been martyred in the cause," said Morgan, sneeringly.

"Every day they have slain a pig," said the leader of the drums. "Two score and eight," reckoning upon his fingers. "Verily a drove from the legion."

They knew not that this unfortunate swine, the only one in the garrison, was made to perform so uncomfort-

able a duty every morning, to mislead the besiegers, and impress them with the idea of a plentiful supply within the walls.

"Even the rabble about the garrison throw shives of bread into our trenches," said Morgan; "and once or twice I have thought their muskets were loaden with peas instead of pellets."

"Then is our assault the more urgent," replied Rigby: "Delay doth but increase her strength. Prince Rupert, too, some fair morning, may jump between us and head-quarters."

"I have as many grenadoes," said Morgan, "as will save his highness the trouble. Were he here, I would make him dance the Flemish *coranto*."

"The Amalekites shall ye utterly destroy," said Gideon, with a sudden indrawing of the breath, as though he were suffering the pangs and throes of possession. "Neither shall ye spare the women and the little ones, nor the stuff; no, not even a kid for a burnt offering. Your eye shall not spare as Saul spared Agag, whom Samuel hewed in pieces."

"Keep thy counsel to light thine own courage.—Yon fiery-tempered woman will not be over nice in her respect to thy vocation.—Peradventure she may dangle thy carcass over the walls in defiance of our summons." Morgan would have rebuked him farther, had not Rigby hastily put the message into his hands, and bade him good speed.

With inward but audible murmurs at this unholy connexion, for Morgan valued not their prayers a rush, Gideon strode forth, his eyes twinkling grievously as the drizzling rime came on his face. His long ungainly figure surmounted by a high peaked hat was seen cautiously

stealing through the trenches. Near to the embrasure by Morgan's mortar-piece he made a sudden halt. After preparing his drum, he first beat the roll to crave attention. He then stepped upon the redoubt, drumming the usual signal for a parley. It was soon answered from the walls, and Gideon with much ceremony and importance arrived, with his musical appendage, before the gate. The requisite formalities being gone through, the draw-bridge was lowered, and this parliamentary representative was speedily admitted through a little wicket into the Babylon which he abhorred. His very feet seemed in danger of defilement. He looked as if breathing the very atmosphere of pollution; but when ordered to kneel down that he might be blindfolded, his spirit rose indignantly at the command.

"Ye be contemners and despisers of our holy heritage.—I have not bowed the knee to Baal, nor will I worship the beast or they that have his name on their foreheads.—Do with me as ye list.—Ye would cover mine eyes that your iniquities may be hidden;—but ye shall suddenly be destroyed, and none shall deliver."

A loud laugh was the answer to this denunciation; for truly it were a marvellous thing to hear an ignorant, arrogant drummer misapply and profane the words of Holy Writ, wresting the Scriptures to their destruction, if not his own.

In the outer court, soldiers were playing at span-counter with silver monies, which Gideon observing, again lifted up the voice of warning and rebuke.

"But destruction cometh upon them, even as upon a woman in——"

"Peace, thou spirit of a drum-stick!" cried one of them,

and, as though he was playing at chuck-farthing, he threw a tester between his teeth; for the soldiers had about fifty pounds amongst them in silver coin, but it was of no use except as so many counters, which they lent one another by handfuls without telling. Sometimes one soldier had won the whole, then another; but if they had been heaps of the rarest jewels, they had been of less worth than pebble-stones.

Gideon's speech was marred in the delivery: thinking he had been hit with a stone, he sputtered out the offending morsel; but, seeing the coin with the king's image and superscription, he gathered it up again.

"This shall be to me for a prey, even a spoil, as Moses spoiled the Egyptians." Saying this, Gideon thrust the king's money into his pocket, and consented to be blindfolded, as was customary, in order that he should not act the spy in his progress. He heard many gates unbarred, many sentries challenged, and the pass-words demanded. Indeed, the order and discipline throughout was of an excellent and well-contrived regularity.

"Make way for the drum!" ran along the avenues, as though he were passing through a numerous array of guards and soldiery. At length, he was safely deposited in a spacious hall used as a guard-room: where his conductors delivered him to captain Ogle, the officer in waiting that morning upon her ladyship. Being informed she was at prayers, for, we are told, "her first care was the service of God, which in sermons and solemn prayers she daily saw performed," Gideon lifted up his hands and said,—

"Their new moons and their fasts are an abomination." He then desired to be conducted near the fire, for the

double purpose of drying his threadbare red coat, and relieving his extreme length by a change of position.

He had not waited long ere the signal was given for an audience. Still blindfolded, he was led by a circuitous route into a little wainscoted chamber lighted by a single bay-window. Here the bandage was taken from his eyes, and when the dimness had a little subsided, he beheld that heroic lady for the first time, whom he had often compared, in no very moderate terms, to Jezebel, and many other names equally appropriate. A very different person she appeared from what his heated and morbid fancy had suggested. Indeed, if she had been the personification of all evil, with a demon's foot and a fiend's visage, he had been less surprised than to find her with the outward form and attributes of humanity.

She was sitting, with the children, before a narrow table covered with papers. She wore a black habit, with a white kerchief on her head, and a long Flanders veil of rich open work. This she threw back, and Gideon beheld a countenance not at all either commanding or heroic, but one to which smiles and good nature would have been most congenial, though a shade of anxiety was now thrown over the natural expression of her features. Her eye seemed to have forgotten its bland and benevolent aspect, and was fixed sharply upon him. For a moment his spiritual pride was daunted, and that natural and inherent principle, not extinct though often dormant, —a deference to superiority, whether of intellect or station—rendered him for a while mute and inoffensive. It is even said that he made a sort of half conscious obeisance; but his mind misgiving him during the offence, which

smote him on the sudden as an act of homage and idolatrous veneration, he breathed out a very audible prayer.

"Pardon thy servant in this matter, even if I have bowed in the house of Rimmon." As he said this, he threw himself back, lifting his narrow eyes towards the ceiling; then, thrusting out his hand with the despatch at arm's length, he was striding forward, but Ogle intervened ere he had made his way to the Countess.

"With all courtesy, friend," said he, "these communications must proceed from the officer on duty."

With great gallantry and respect the captain presented it to his mistress.

"Eye-service and will-worship!" growled Gideon. "'T is like your vain and popish idolatry and the like, through the ministry of saints, even to a woman, vain and sinful as yourselves. I would as soon commit my prayers to the angel of the bottomless pit!"

Her ladyship had broke open the seals. Her eye kindled as she spoke.—

"Thou hadst thy reward were we to hang thee up at the gate.—Yet art thou but a foolish instrument in the hands of this traitor Rigby; and we do not punish the weapon, but him that wields it."

Now Gideon, finding himself moved by natural heat and choler, and mistaking this wrath for a righteous indignation, thought himself surely called upon to reprove these unrighteous ones for their iniquities. His body fell into the usual disposition for an harangue.—His eyes rolled upwards, and his whole frame swung to and fro whilst the exhortation was preparing. To his great mortification, however, the lady quitted the room, leaving word for them to follow her to the hall.

The preacher was greatly chagrined, when his eyes resumed their office, to find himself almost thrust out and on his way back to the guard-chamber. A number of soldiers and domestics were here assembled. Lady Derby with her chaplain, steward, and captains, ranged on each side, stood at the higher end of the chamber.

Silence was commanded, whilst she read aloud the despatch.

"And this,—and this, my answer!" said she, tearing the paper as she spoke, and throwing the fragments indignantly from her.

"Tell that insolent rebel, he shall neither have our persons, our goods, nor yet this house.—When our strength and provision be spent, we shall find a fire more merciful than Rigby; and then, if the providence of God prevent it not, my goods and house shall burn in his sight:—myself, children, and soldiers, rather than fall into his hands, will seal our religion and loyalty in the same flame!"

A loud shout burst through the assembly, who, with one general voice, cried out,

"We will die for his majesty and your honour:—God save the king!"

Gideon's countenance grew terrible, and he seemed as though suffering under some violent excitement. Lifting up his hand, he was about to thunder forth anathemas and denunciations, the dealing out of which, strange to say, most parties agree in reserving to themselves. Even men whose honesty and single-heartedness we cannot doubt—who have boldly defended our rights and liberties against religious tyranny and intolerance—have still arrogated to themselves exclusively the control

of opinions and modes of belief:—wielding the terrors of Heaven where the arm of Omnipotence can alone be felt; their efforts futile and ineffectual, as though a feeble worm were attempting to grasp the quiver,—to launch the bolt and the arrow from the skies.

But Gideon's purpose was again frustrated: the impious idolaters, refusing to listen, blindfolded him, before he was aware.

But his spirit kindled suddenly, and he cried aloud,

"Yet shut your eyes wilfully, and go blindfold to your destruction:—To-morrow these walls in which ye trust, this Egypt in whom your soul delighteth, shall be as Sodom. Brimstone and fire shall devour you; and they that flee from it shall not escape!"

Gideon and his threats were, however, speedily thrust out at the gates, and the answer transmitted through him, was faithfully reported to the council.

Though this heroïc woman was not daunted, yet she saw her soldiers were at times dispirited, by reason of the expected succours so long delayed. The mortar-piece, too, which, if it had been well managed, was sufficient to have laid the fortress in ruins, was an object of daily terror and annoyance.

One of the MS. journals states,* "The litle ladyes had stomack to digest cannon; but the stoutest souldiers had noe hearts for granadoes, and might not they att once free themselves from the continuall expectac'on of death?"

Her ladyship was well aware that inactivity is, of all things, the most dangerous and dispiriting to the soldier,

* Harleian MSS. 2043.

who, used to the bustle and array of camps, doth fear nothing so much as a quiet home and winter quarters.

It was needful that something should be done, some decisive blow struck; for, according to the historian, "Chaunges of tymes are the most fitt for brave attempts, and delays they are dangerous, where softnes and quyetnes draweth more danger than hazarding rashly."

"A hard choice either to kill or be killed;" but such was their case. The Countess therefore proposed, that the next morning, a little while after day-break, they should make a sortie; and though ordnance was planted against every passage, yet that they should sally forth, and stake their all upon one desperate throw.

On the 26th April, about four o'clock, before sunrise, the action commenced. Captain Chisnall and Captain Fox, with Lieutenants Brettargh, Penketh, Walthew, and Worrall, were appointed for the service. Captain Ogle had the main-guard to secure a retreat at the southern gate, while Rawsthorne had the charge of the sally-gate to secure a retreat on the eastern side. Captain Ratcliffe had the command of the marksmen and musketeers on the walls, while Farmer, with the reserve, stood ready at the parade, to relieve any of them in case of necessity. All things being ready, Captain Chisnall and two lieutenants issued out at the eastern sally-port. The morning favoured their attempt, being wet and foggy, so that before he was discovered he got completely under their cannon, marching immediately upon the scouts where the enemy had planted their great gun.

"It cost him a light skirmish to gain the fort: at last hee entered; many slayne, some prisoners, and some escaping. Now by the command of that battery, the retreate

being assured, Capt Foxe seconds him wth much bravery, beateing upon their trenches from the easterne to the south-west point, till hee came to the work w^{ch} secur'd the morter-peece, w^{ch} being guarded wth 50 men, hee found sharpe service, forceing his way through muskett and cannon, and beateing the enemy out of the sconce wth stones, his muskett, by reason of the high worke, being unserviceable. After a quarter of an houres hard service, his men gott the trench and scal'd the rampier, where many of the enemy fledd, the rest were slayne. The sconce, thus won, was made good by a squadron of musketteers, which much annoyed the enemy, attempting to come upp agayne. The 2 maine works thus obtained, the two captaynes wth ease walked the rest of the round, whilst Mr. Broome, wth a companye of her lapps servants, and some fresh souldiers, had a care to levell the ditch, and by a present device, with ropes lifting the morter-peece to a low dragge, by strength of men drew it into the house, Capt. Ogle defending the passage ag^{t} another companye of the enemye which play'd upon their retreate. The like endeavour was used to gayne theire greate gunnes; but lying beyond the ditch, and being of such bulke and weight, all our strength could not bringe them off before the whole army had fallen upon us; however our men tooke tyme to poyson all the cannon round, if any thing will doe the feate, Capt. Rawstorne still defending the first passe ag^{t} some offers of the enemy to come up by the wood."

It was near the conclusion of this affray, as Mr. Broome, the steward, and several of his helpers, were encompassing the great dragon which had so often vomited forth fire and

smoke upon them, intending to carry it away captive, that they heard a voice from the breach below:—

"Hold, ye uncircumcised: I will make your house desolate, and the glory thereof shall be turned into ashes."

The mortar was ready charged, and they beheld Gideon, with a lighted match, springing towards them. Several of the men drew aside in dismay; but as Providence willed it, he was prevented from his purpose, the light being struck from his hand, and himself tumbled backwards into a deep and muddy ditch, extinguishing both light and life apparently together. But he arose, and would have run a tilt at them in this unsavoury condition, had he not been caught by one of his enemies, who waggishly exclaimed,—

"Let us yoke this great Amalekite to the gun, He'll help us well over the ditch."

This goodly piece of advice was not neglected; and the unhappy Gideon, fastened between two yoke-fellows, was dragged on by main force, the hindmost threatening to shoot him if he made any resistance.

In vain did he cry out for vengeance upon them. His gods were deaf—no miracle was wrought for his deliverance; and though he would have called down fire from heaven upon his adversaries, the thunders he impiously desired, died harmless on his own tongue.

We again quote the words of the journal:—

"This action continued an houre, with the loss of two men on our part, who, after they were mortally wounded, still fired upon the enemy, till all retreating. What number of the enemy were slain it is not easy to guesse. Besides the execuc'on done in their trenches, Capt. Farmours and Capt. Rattcliffes reserves, wth the best marksmen, played upon them from the walls with much slaughter,

as they quitt theire holds. Our men brought in many armes, three drums, and but five prisoners, preserved by Capt. Chisnall to shew that he had mercy as well as valour. One of thees was an assistant to their engineere, Browne, who discovered to us the nature of their trench, in which they had laboured two monthes to draw away our water. Theire first designe was to drayne and open our springs, not considering theire rise from a higher ground south-east from the house, w^ch^ must needs supply our deepe well, wherever they suncke their fall: this invenc'on faileing, they bringe up an open trench in a worme work, the earth being indented or sawed for the securitie of their myners, and the ditch two yards wide and three deepe for the fall of the water.

"But now neither ditches nor aught els troubled our souldiers, theire grand terror, the morter-peece, which had frighted 'em from theire meate and sleepe, like a dead lyon, quyetly lying among 'em: everye one had his eye and his foote upon him, shoutëing and rejoyceing as merrily as they used to doe w^th^ theire ale and bagpypes. Indeed ev'y one had this apprehenc'on of the service, that the maine worke was done, and what was yet behind but a meere pastime."—

"Her lapp though not often overcarryed w^th^ any light expressions of joy, yet religiously sensible of soe great a blessing, and desireous, according to her pious disposition, to returne acknowledgements to the righte authour, God alone, presently commands her chaplaynes to a publike thanksgiving.

"The enemy, thus terrifyed with this defeate, durst not venture theire workes agayne till midnight; towards morneing removeing some of theire canon, and the next

night stealeing away all the rest, save one peece for a memorand. This one escapt nayleing, which the colonells durst not venture on its owne mount, but planted att a distance, for feare of the madmen in the garrison.

"One thing may not heere bee omitted; that day that our men gave Rigby that shameful defeate, had hee destined for the p'secuteing of his utmost cruelty. Hee had invited, as it is now gen'ally confest, all his friends, the holy abettors of this mischiefe, to come see the house yeelded or burnt, hee haveing purposed to use his morter gunne wth fireballs or granadoes all afternoone; but her lapp before two o'clocke (his own tyme) gave him a very skurvy satisfying answr, soe that his friends came opportunely to comfort him, who was sicke of shame and dishonour, to be routed by a lady and a handfull of men."

This proved a sore disaster to the besiegers. The soldiers, too, began to cry out for their pay. The long-expected plunder of Lathom had hitherto kept them quiet; but they were now willing to leave this precious booty to the next comers, and content themselves with their stated allowance.

Rigby, fearful of the crumbling away and dispersion of his army, made shift to furnish some small arrears of their pay, declaring that it had cost him 2000*l.* of his own monies during the siege; but how he got such great store of gold we are not informed, save "that he was once a lawyer, and a bad one!"

Still there were many deserters, escaping even in the open day; not a few of them coming over with valuable intelligence to the garrison.

Wearied with duty, and sorely perplexed, Rigby sent for Colonel Holland, from Manchester, to his assistance.

Many days now elapsed, during which little happened worth recording on either side. On the 23d May, Captain Moseley brought another message to her ladyship, desiring, in terms of great courtesy and respect, that she would grant him an interview. He was received with great ceremony; for she abated not a whit of the dignity belonging to her high birth and station.

"Captain Moseley," said she, having read the summons, commanding her that she should yield up the house, together with the ammunition, arms, goods, servants, children, and her own person too — submitting to the mercy of parliament, "you are, I understand, an honourable man, and a soldier."

He bowed with great humility.

"I would not receive this from any other. But ——" and her lip curled proudly as she spoke. "Here seems a slight mistake in the wording of your message. They should rather have written *cruelty* and not *mercy!*"

"Nay, my lady," he replied, "the mercy of parliament. Trust me, you will not be evil entreated at their hands."

"The *mercies* of the wicked are *cruel*," said she, quickly, but with great composure. "Not that I mean," she continued, "a wicked parliament, of which body I have an honourable and reverend esteem, but wicked agents and factors, such as Moore and Rigby, who, for the advantage of their own interests, labour to turn kingdoms into blood and ruin. Besides, 't is dangerous treating when the sword is given into the enemies' hand."

"Most assuredly, madam, as our tractates on the art of war teach us,—which it seems you have not studied in

vain," said Moseley, bowing with an air of great deference and gallantry. "Your ladyship is commander-in-chief, we hear."

"My lord being absent, I am left in trust, and cannot listen to treaties without his permission."

"Not to dishonourable overtures, assuredly. But, if we agree to your own conditions,—quitting the house in the way it shall seem best to your ladyship, as was once the basis of your own propositions, I believe, it cannot in this case be a reproach or a breach of trust, but will prevent much damage, and be the saving of many lives."

"I will not treat without my lord's commands, Captain Moseley, and I have listened to you longer than is expedient. It is unjust to myself and these brave defenders, that I appear in any way doubtful of their ability and courage. For their sakes and for my own I must end this parley."

The officer bowed low at this peremptory dismissal, wishing her ladyship's resolution were less firm, or her means more ample.

"I can but deliver your reply. Yet——" he hesitated awhile. "There be fierce and bloody men about the camp, who would lay down their own lives to compass your destruction. It is not in our power to restrain them."

"One of these flaming zealots is already extinguished: we have him safe under cover," said her ladyship, smiling; "in our own custody, I trow. He threatened us with all the plagues of Egypt, and that of his own tongue to boot, —the worst that e'er visited the garrison. One morning, an earthquake would devour us; another, we were to be visited with the destruction of Sodom. Some of our men

once looked out for the coming tempest, and buffetted him well for their disappointment. He seems either malignant or insane; but in charity, of which Christian exercise he seems utterly ignorant, we suppose the latter. We have, therefore, made his feet fast in the stocks, from whence I hear, he pronounces his anathemas as confidently as though he were armed with the power and thunders of the Vatican!"

"May I crave the name of this doughty personage?—We have but too many of them amongst us."

"Verily, 'tis your drum, by whose hands I have had a message heretofore. The chances of war have again brought him hither,—but now a prisoner!"

"Gideon Greatbach?"

"The same. We have heard him, with many blasphemous allusions liken himself unto that great one among the judges of Israel,—and truly he seems more fitted to wield the sword than the drum-stick!"

"Your ladyship would, perhaps, indulge me with an interview. It might comfort him to see one from the camp."

"Provided that no sinister design or advantage be lurking under this request. Yet am I speaking, I would fain hope, to a gentleman and a soldier."

Moseley was conducted down a dark flight of steps, damp and slippery. The ooze and slime rendered his footing tedious and insecure. Soon he recognized the mighty voice of Gideon bellowing forth a triumphant psalm. Another stave was just commencing as the door opened, and the torch glared lurid and dismally on the iron features and grisly aspect of the captive. A pair of rude stocks, through which Gideon's long extremities

protruded, stood in the middle of the dungeon. He scowled terrifically at the intruders; but suddenly resumed his exercise.

"Still at thy devotions?" said Moseley; but the moody fanatic vouchsafed not to reply.

"We must wait the finishing of this duty, I fear," said the captain, knowing that interruption would be useless. Silently they awaited the conclusion, when Gideon abruptly cried out,

"Captain Moseley, are ye, too, cast into this den of lions?"

"I came hither on an embassage, and I have craved this visit ere I depart."

"Hast' furnished my breakfast?" enquired this stalwart knight from the enchanted wood. "I think your garrison be short of victual, or my——"

"Hold thy tongue, thou piece of ill-contrived impertinence," said the gaoler. We have victual and drink too; but for such as thou art, it were an ill-bestowed morsel. I marvel what can have possessed my lady to keep thee alive!"

The gaoler drew out from his provision-bag a small dark-coloured loaf, which he threw at the hungry captive, who, to say the truth, had been half-starved since his imprisonment.

Gideon was devouring it greedily without any further notice, when he suddenly cried out to his keeper,

"Where gat ye this coarse stuff? I would not say good-morrow to my dog with so crusty a meal."

"It was tossed over the wall," replied the gaoler. "Our friends oft supply us that way with provision,

captain. I picked it up as I came, and thought it was too good for thy dainty appetite."

"Captain Moseley," said the hungry drummer, with great earnestness, "take this. Break it before thy brethren, and shew them how vilely these Egyptian task-masters do entreat us in the house of bondage."

There was something more than usually impressive in his manner. Moseley took the loaf as requested; and the gaoler, as if the object before him were beneath suspicion, exclaimed with a knowing look,

"Had I not brought the manchet myself, and watched thee narrowly, I should have guessed thou hadst crammed some secret message therein to the camp. But I defy thee, or any of thy batch, to cheat old Gabriel, the rogues' butler!"

"Pr'ythee, search," said Captain Moseley, drawing the loaf from his pocket:—"thou mayest, peradventure, find treachery in a tooth-mark, for o' my troth they be legibly written."

"Nay," said Gabriel, with great self-importance, "the knave's jaws will score no ciphers. I had as lief interpret pot-hooks and ladles."

The Captain, again thrusting it beneath his belt, promised to shew his commanders with what coarse fare and severity the prisoners were treated.

"Wilt thou that I intercede for thee before the Countess?" he continued: "if so be that she would remit thee of this durance."

In a voice of thunder spake the incorrigible Gideon:—

"Intercede!—I would as lief pray to the saints they should intercede with the Virgin Mary. I will rot from

this perch piece-meal ere I pray to yonder ungodly woman. Yet shall I escape out of their hands, but not by mine own might, or mine own strength," said the lion-hearted captive.

Leaving this indomitable round-head to his fate, Moseley returned to the camp, reporting the ill success of his mission.

Great part of the day was spent in angry discussion, so that Moseley had nigh forgotten his message from Gideon; yet he remembered it ere he left the council. Pulling out a coarse bannock, to the great astonishment of his auditory, he brake it, relating his interview with the captive. Near to where the prisoner had taken his last mouthful, Moseley found a bit of crumpled paper. The surprise and dismay of the assembly may be conceived, after he had read the following billet:—

"My dearest heart,

"With much joy and comfort I send thee news that his Highness Prince Rupert hath gotten a great victory over the rebels at Newark; and I have besought his Majesty that he should march into Lancashire. By two days, at farthest, these enemies, who now beleaguer my house, shall be cut off. We purpose to come upon them suddenly, so that they shall be taken in their own snare. I have raised 3000*l.* on the jewels, conveyed to me from Lathom by the last sally, which sum I purpose giving in largess to the soldiers, that it may quicken them to thy help.—My prayers and blessing for thee and the children.

"Thine,

"DERBY."

This secret intelligence had missed its destination. The gaoler had unfortunately picked it up from where some friendly hand had thrown it, reserving the curious envelope for Gideon's breakfast, not aware of the important message it contained. But the prisoner, more wary than his keeper, when he felt the paper between his teeth, rightly judged that it was some communication of importance to his enemies, and craftily conveyed it, as we have seen, into the hands of Captain Moseley.

No mean act of heroism, for a starving man to wrench the food from his own jaws,—a deed we might in vain look for amongst the patriots of our own day,—persons who would sneer at the fanaticism, and, it may be, the sincerity, of Gideon Greatbatch.

Consternation was visible throughout the assembly:—they had all along flattered themselves with the expectation that Prince Rupert's army was too urgently required for the relief of York, to have caused them any disturbance; and, with inward curses on the king for his humanity, secret preparations were made for raising the siege.

Though ignorant of the cause, the garrison soon espied an unusual bustle in the camp. They were evidently preparing for some exploit. One of the spies brought intelligence that two squadrons had departed in the night, and that Colonels Moore and Ashton were on their return to Manchester.

On Monday morning, the 27th of May, it was agreed that Captains Ogle and Rawsthorne should make a sally. But they found the enemy had been beforehand with them, leaving the camp in the utmost terror and disorder. Intelligence now arrived that Prince Rupert had entered

Lancashire by way of Stockport, where the parliament army, under Colonels Duckenfield, Mainwaring, Buckley, and others, had suffered a total rout. The besiegers had commenced their retreat between twelve and one o'clock the preceding night.

Thus ended the first siege of Lathom, after the place had been closely beset four months; during which time the garrison lost but six men,—four in the service, and two by negligence and over-daring.

They were, in general, supplied with provisions; her ladyship seeing the men's rations duly served. Yet were they not seldom pushed to a sally for their dinner: their friends outside, by lights and other appointed signals, directed the foragers in their operations.

The enemy shot 107 cannon-balls, 32 stones, and but four grenadoes. By their own confession near 100 barrels of gunpowder were spent, part of which was in supplies to the garrison, who often replenished their stock at the expense of the besiegers. They lost about 500 men, besides wounded and prisoners, according to their own returns.

The next day Rigby, with about 3000 men, drew up at Eccleston Green, six miles only from Lathom, in great uncertainty which way to march, fearful of meeting with Prince Rupert. In the end, imagining that his Highness would go through Blackburn or Lancaster to the relief of York, Rigby marched off in great haste to Bolton, then a garrison town, and well fortified.

The Prince, hearing of their escape, together with Lord Derby, immediately turned their forces in this direction, determined to carry the place by assault, and revenge the insults and barbarity her ladyship had endured. This resolution was terribly accomplished. Sixteen hundred

of her besiegers lay dead on the place; and twenty-two colours, which three days before flourished proudly before the house, were presented to her from his Highness by Sir Richard Cline, as a memorial of her deliverance, and "a happy remembrance of God's mercy and goodness to her and her family."

RAVEN CASTLE.

"He bargain'd with two ruffians strong,
Which were of furious mood,
That they should take these children young,
And slay them in a wood.

"Away then went these pretty babes,
Rejoycing at that tide,
Rejoycing with a merry minde,
They should on cock-horse ride."

THE CHILDREN IN THE WOOD.

RAVEN CASTLE.

SITUATED amid the wild and high moorlands, at whose feet hath stood for ages the royal and ducal capital of the county palatine of Lancaster, once rose a strong border defence, called Raven Castle. Its site only remains. This noble and castellated fortress now lies an almost undistinguishable heap on the barren moor: the sheep browse above it, and the herdsman makes his pillow where warriors and dames once met in chivalric pomp, and the chieftain held his feudal and barbaric court.

The point on which it stood is nearly on the line of separation between the counties of York and Lancaster.

From the southern declivity of the hill on the Yorkshire side springs one of the rills which fall into the Hodder, a well-known stream, held in great respect by those ambulatory gentlemen, whose love of society and amusing recreations leads them to lay in a stock of patience for life in the pursuit of piscatory delights

This mountainous tract forms part of the forest of Bowland, once ranged by numerous herds of deer: and is still under the jurisdiction of a master-forester, or bow-bearer, called *Parker,* which office has been held for centuries by a family of that name.

It was in the broad and still moonlight of a spring morning, in the year 16—, that two horsemen were ascending by a steep and difficult pass through the Trough of Bolland, along the hills and almost pathless wilds of the forest. They were apparently of that dubious class, called "Knights of the Post,"—highwaymen, deer-stealers, or cattle-harriers,—all and every of which occupations they occasionally followed.

As they passed by the edge of a steep ravine, from which hung a few stunted oaks projecting over the gulf, the foremost rider—for the path admitted them not abreast—turned sharply round on his saddle.

"Again!—Didst thou not see it, Michael?" enquired he, in great alarm.

"Nothing, Anthony, as I do follow thee in this honest trade;—nothing, I tell thee, save thine ugly face in this clear moonshine. Pr'ythee make more speed, and thou wilt have the fewer wry mouths to answer for. Thou art fool enough to make a man forswear honesty, and rid him of his conscience for life. Beshrew me! but thou hast got a troublesome tenant;—either less roguery, or fewer

qualms:—depend on't, thou canst not keep friends with both."

"I'll go no further. Old Hildebrand finds some foul business on his hands, that he would fain thrust into our fingers. A bad business quits best at the beginning:—if once we get to the middle, we might as well go on; or we may be like old Dick, who swam half-way through the mill-pond, and then, being faint-hearted, swam back again."

"Look thee now, thou art a precious ass:—an' thou wouldst be a wit without brains, and a rogue, ay, a very wicked and unconditional rogue, without courage. Tut, that same cowardly rogue, of all unparalleled villains is verily the worst. Your liquorish cat, sculking and scared with a windle-straw, is always the biggest thief, and has the cruellest paws, for all her demure looks, and her plausible condescensions."

"I don't care for thy jeers, Michael."

"What!—hast' brought thy purpose to an anchor already? 'Tis well. I shall on to Raven Castle with all speed, if it were only to inform one Hildebrand Wentworth of this sudden qualm. Likewise I may, peradventure, remember to tell him of another little qualm thou wast taken with, once upon a time, at the sight of a score of his fat beeves; a little bit of choice roguery played off upon him by honest Anthony of the tender conscience. Look to it, comrade, he shall know of this, before thou canst convey thy cowardly carcass out of his clutches. An' it be thou goest forward,—mum!—backward!—Hah! have I caught thee, my pretty bird?"

At the conclusion of this speech, with the malice of a fiend urging on his hesitating victim to the commission of

some loathed act of folly and of crime, the speaker lashed on his companion's beast, and they were soon past the steepest part of the ascent, on their way to Raven Castle. Its present occupier, who, it appears, they had befriended beforetime, in the way of their several callings, had sent for them in haste, requiring their aid, it might seem, in some business relative to their profession.

For an hour or two they travelled on, as fast as the nature of their track would permit. Day was just brightening in the east, when, emerging from a more than usually intricate path, they pushed through a thick archway of boughs. Suddenly a bare knoll presented itself, sloping towards a narrow rivulet; beyond, a dark and well-fortified mansion stood before them:—here and there, a turret-shaped chamber lifting its mural crown above the rest, rose clear and erect against a glowing sky, now rapidly displacing the grey hues of the morning. The narrow battlements rose out, sharp and distinct, but black as their own grim recesses, in solemn contrast with the bright and rolling masses from behind, breaking into all the gorgeous tints that betoken a heavy and lurid atmosphere.

They crossed a narrow bridge, and the clattering of their horses' hoofs was soon heard in the court-yard of the castle.

"So, masters, if it had not pleased your betters to have built hostels and roosting-places on the road, I might have been snug in my blanket some hours ago, may be."

The personage who thus accosted them was dressed in a plain leathern cap and doublet, with a pair of stout hose that would not have disgraced a burgher of the first magnitude: his short and frizzled beard was curiously twirled

and pointed, we may suppose, after the fashion of those regions; and his manner and appearance was that of some confidential menial belonging to the establishment. His whole demeanour had in it an air of impertinent authority: his little sharp eyes twinkled in all the plenitude of power, and peered in the faces of the travellers as they alighted to render him an unwilling salutation.

"We have made the best of our road, Master Geoffery, since we left our quarters in Netherdale. But, in troth, it's a weary way, and a drouthy one into the bargain; I have not wet even the tip of this poor beast's nose since we started."

"Go to; an' the beasts be cared for, thine own muzzle may take its chance of a swill. Willy, see to the horses. Now for business. Master has been waiting for you these three hours:—make what excuse you may. Heigho! my old skull will leak out my brains soon with these upsittings."

Taking a small lamp from a recess, he commanded the strangers to follow. A wide staircase led to the gallery, from whence a number of low doors communicated with the chambers or dormitories. Entering a passage from an obscure corner, they ascended a winding stair. The huge and terrific spurs of the intruders struck with a shrill clank on the narrow steps, mingled with the grumblings of Master Geoffery Hardpiece: a continual muttering was heard from the latter, by way of running accompaniment to the directions which, ever and anon, he found it needful to set forth.

"There—an ass, a very ass!—keep thy face from the wall, I tell thee, and lift up thy great leathern hoofs."

Then came another series of murmurings, mingled with confused and rambling sentences.

"This stair is like old Giles's horn, it's long a winding. Now,—thy spurs, is it? Aroynt thee, knave, thou art like to frighten the children with their clattering. They are up, and ready for their trip. Alice will stitch a pillow to your pummels, and they'll ride bravely, the pretty dears. Stop there, I tell ye; I'll just say that you wait his pleasure, and return."

Old Hardpiece tapped gently at a small door; it was opened hastily; and a few moments only elapsed ere Master Geoffery's cunning face was cautiously extended out of the narrow opening. He beckoned to his companions, and at once ushered them into a low chamber. A lamp, half-extinguished, stood on the floor; the walls were nearly bare, and streaked in various colours by the moisture filtering from the roof; a curiously-carved oak-table, and two or three stone benches, comprised the furniture of the apartment; a few rusty swords, with two large pistols nearly falling from their holsters, hung from the wall. In one corner, reposing in decayed dignity, were seen some halberds, with several unmatched pairs of mildewed boots; near to the window, or rather loop-hole, heaped up in dust and disorder, lay a score or two of rusty helmets, their grim appurtenances mostly broken and disjointed.

Pacing to and fro in this audience-chamber, appeared a figure of about the middle size, attired in a loose open garment. His head was nearly bald; a few thin locks only hung from the lower part of his poll; and yet his age was not so far advanced as the scanty covering of his forehead might seem to intimate. He paused not as they entered; but, during the greater part of the succeeding

interview, persevered in the same restless and abrupt gait, as though repose were anguish, and it was only by a continued change of position that he could soothe the rising perturbation of his spirit.

"Is this your haste, when my commands are most urgent?"

He turned sharply upon them as he spoke: his eyes grew wild and keen; but at times a heaviness and languor, as if from long watching, seemed to oppress them.

"We could not——" Michael was stammering out an apology, when thus interrupted:—

"Enough! I know what thou wouldst say. Let thy comrade remain below. Geoffery, conduct him to the refectory; Michael abides here. Haste, and let refreshments be prepared."

What was the purport of the conversation that ensued, may be surmised from the following history.

Old Hardpiece, grumbling the greater part of the way, led his companion through a labyrinth of stairs and passages to a small room, where a huge flagon of ale, with cold beef and other substantial articles for breakfast, were about being displayed. Anthony, nothing loth, threw aside his cap, and unbraced his girdle, for the more capacious disposal of such savoury and delicious viands. A heavy pull at the tankard again brought out Master Geoffery's deep-mouthed oratory. Anthony's tongue grew more nimble as his appetite waxed less vigorous: he asked many questions about the business which required their presence at Raven Castle in such haste.

"The orphan children of Sir Henry Fairfax are to be conveyed to some place of concealment for a short period. Master says he has had intimation of a design on the part

of the late Sir Henry's friends to seize them perforce. Which act of violence Hildebrand Wentworth, being left as their sole guardian, will make all haste to prevent."

"The children of the late Sir Harry Fairfax, who was killed in the wars?" enquired Anthony.

"Ay, ay. Poor things! since their mother drowned herself——"

Old Hardpiece here looked round, as though fearing some intrusion. He continued in an under tone,—

"Goody Shelton says she walks in the forest; and that her wraith so frightened Humphrey's horse, that it would not budge a straw's breadth, just beside the great oak in the Broad Holm, before you get into the forest on the other side towards Slaidburn."

Anthony was, at this precise moment, cramming the last visible remains of a goose-pie into the same place where he had before deposited half the good things on the table, anointing his beard with their savoury outskirts,—when suddenly his chin dropped, his face assumed a sort of neutral tinge, and his whole form appeared to grow stiff with terror. He made several efforts to speak; but the following words only could be distinguished:—

"I was sure it would be a ghost!"

"What!—a ghost!—Where?" anxiously enquired Geoffery.

"Just by the great oak in the Broad Holm, on the other side of the forest."

"What was it like?"

"I cannot tell; and Michael pretended he did not see it!"

"Thou canst surely shew the appearance it put on."

"Something, as it might be, like unto a woman, crossed

our path twice, and within a stone's throw. Oh, Master Geoffery, we be dead men!"

Another groan here interrupted their discourse. Master Hardpiece muttered some unintelligible prayers, putting on a face of great solemnity. Several minutes elapsed, while the following exclamations rapidly succeeded each other:—

"A ghost!—save us!—a very ghost! I'll not to Slaidburn again without help. Another draught, Anthony; a stiffener to thy courage, mayhap. It's now day-light though," said he, looking through the casement, "and most of us fear only what may be felt,—in the day-time at any rate."

Anthony took the cup, and, apparently without being aware, drank off the contents. He was much invigorated by the draught, which seemed to invest him with new courage; partly from the recollection that a long daylight would intervene between the beginning and the end of his journey, and partly because of the sudden rush of spirits to his brain. He arose, and assuming a posture more erect, planted his cap in a becoming attitude, whilst Geoffery was putting aside the empty vessels into a sort of large wooden chalice, for the purpose of a more convenient removal.

Light footsteps were now heard bounding along the passage, and the door was suddenly burst open by two rosy-cheeked children; the elder a boy of some four or five years' growth, and his sister scarcely a twelvemonth younger.

"Master Geoffery, Master Geoffery," lisped one laughing urchin, "hide me; there is Alice—she'll not let me

go. We are to ride on two great horses; and I shall have a sword, and sister Julia a coach."

Here nurse Alice made her appearance. She had been weeping: tears and entreaties were vain. She asked permission to accompany them; but with a frown Hildebrand Wentworth had chidden her from his presence. Since the loss of their mother, and almost from the time that news had arrived of their father's death, which happened a little while before the birth of Julia, she had borne a mother's part to her little charge; and had it been allowed her, she would gladly have served them without reward.

Fearful of leaving them, she had followed hastily into the room. With a searching glance she eyed the stranger for a while; then suddenly turning to the children, she addressed them with great seriousness and affection.

"Harry, you have not repeated your prayer this morning. Do you think God will take care of you to-day, if you ask him not?"

Here the rebuked boy grew silent; and with a suffused face, ran to his nurse. Whilst in her lap, he poured out his morning orison. It was a simple but affecting request. Julia knelt also; and Alice, laying a hand on each, blessed the children.

"God of their fathers, I commit them to thy care!"

She could say no more; loud sobs checked her utterance; but leaning over these little ones, she convulsively clasped them in her embrace.

Old Hardpiece grew unusually busy about matters of no importance, and the hard-featured trooper was seen to brush his brows, as though some unpleasant suspicions

had crossed his brain. He raised his arm as he gazed on the children, muttering as he clenched his hand,

"If he dare!"—He then carelessly examined his sword, returning it quickly into its sheath, as the weeping Alice drew away the children to her own apartment. Old Geoffery now grew more talkative. Leaning his chin upon his hand, and his elbow on the table, he thus proceeded:

"It's four long years come St. Barnabas, since Sir Harry's death; and my lady, rest her soul! went melancholy soon after. Every thing was bequeathed in trust to my master, Hildebrand Wentworth, a great friend of Sir Harry's, and his secretary or purse-bearer, I forget which—no matter,—all the property, I say, was left in trust for Sir Harry's wife and children. Hildebrand brought a will from Sir Harry to this effect, and poor Lady Fairfax never looked up afterwards. She moped about, and would see nobody, and then it was they said she was out of her wits. It was not long before her head-gear and mantle were found by the river side just below the old bridge you crossed—but her body never."

Here the entrance of Michael cut short the old man's discourse.

"Belike thou hast not lacked a cup of warm sack, and a whey-posset with my master in the west turret," scoffingly cried Master Geoffery. Michael looked surly as he replied—

"Old Gabergeon, let us have a draught of thy best—a stirrup-cup. Breakfast I have settled with, above stairs."

"Marry take your swill, Mr. Saucypate," tartly replied Geoffery. "And so, because you have eaten and drunk

with my master, it is "Old Gabergeon;" else had it been good Master Hardpiece, or "If you will, Master Geoffery!" Out upon such carrion, say I, that think themselves live meat, when they are but fly-blown."

"Old Geoffery," said Michael, coolly, we'll settle our rank at a more convenient opportunity. Just now I'll thank thee for the flagon."

"It's in the cupboard," growled Hardpiece. "Verily these arms would tingle. But I am old, and that same Michael but a sorry brute—no beating would mend him. An ass of most vicious propensities; he will bite forwards and kick backwards. Friends get the benefit of his teeth, and foes the favour of his heels."

Thus did the old man console himself for the rudeness he could not restrain. It was not long ere a summons hurried them to the court-yard. They found their beasts equipped and ready to depart; Harry and Julia looking joyously on, vastly diverted with the horses' accoutrements. Hildebrand stood by the gateway, looking moody and anxious for their departure; Alice, full of sorrow, attended with some refreshments, which were stowed in the wallet. The journey was but short, and an hour's ride that fine morning, Michael said, would bring them to their destination. Hildebrand forbade him to mention the place where he wished to conceal the children, lest it should be known to their iniquitous relatives. Each horseman, with a child mounted before him, slowly passed the outer court, at the entrance of which Alice disappeared. The iron tramp of the steeds rang shrilly from underneath the arched gateway; Hildebrand stood by the platform; he bade them good speed. Anthony passed first; Michael checked his horse for a

moment, when Hildebrand took the hand of the boy, and pressed it; but one portentous look, as at the recognition of some sinister purpose, passed between Michael and the old man, unobserved by his colleague. Hildebrand raised his hand above his mouth, and slowly whispered,

"Remember!—the gulf underneath the waterfall."

The horsemen departed. Passing the bridge, they were just rising over the green slope, when the children recognised Alice upon her mistress's palfrey. They screamed out loudly to her; but she was riding in a contrary direction, and soon passed out of their sight.

The narrow glades of the forest suddenly encompassed them. The morning was pretty far advanced; the merry birds twittered in their dun covert, brushing the dew-drops from the boughs with their restless wings. The thrush and blackbird poured forth a more melancholy note; whilst the timid rabbit, scared from his morning's meal, rushed by and sought his burrow. The wood grew thicker, and the sunbeams, that shot previously in broad slopes across their path, soon became but as lines of intensely chequered light piercing the grim shadows beneath. The trees too put on a more sombre character; and the sward appeared choked with rank and noxious weeds. It seemed a path rarely trod, and only to be recognised by occasional openings through the underwood.

They travelled for some hours. Michael had taken the lead, and Anthony with his prattling charge rode carelessly on. Looking round, the latter suddenly checked his horse. A momentary alarm overspread his features as he cried,

"Michael, you have surely mistaken the path; an hour's

ride should have brought us to the end of our journey, and our beasts have been footing it on since morning."

"Heed not, comrade; thou wilt soon find we have the right track before us. We shall be through the wood presently."

"Why this is the road to Ingleton, if I mistake not; I hear the roar of the Greta."

"Right—we shall be on our road to the old castle shortly."

They travelled on more silently than before, until the brawling of the torrent they had heard for some time increased with rapid intensity. The road now widening, Anthony spurred on his beast by the side of his companion, who slackened his pace, to afford an opportunity for further parley.——

"Whither are we bound?" enquired Anthony.

"Where the children will be well cared for."

A dubious expression of countenance, which Anthony but too well understood, accompanied these words; and villain was expressed by indications too unequivocal to be easily mistaken, through every change and inflection of his visage. Anthony, though not of the most unsullied reputation, and probably habituated to crimes at which humanity might shudder, pressed the little victim closer to his breast. The prattle of the babe had won his heart; and the morning scene with Alice had softened his spirit so, that he could have wept when he thought of the remorseless nature of his comrade, to whose care the children were intrusted.

The roar of the torrent grew louder. Suddenly they entered upon a sort of irregular amphitheatre—woods rising above each other to the very summit of the hills

by which they were surrounded. A swollen waterfall was visible, below which a bare and flattened trunk, whose boughs had apparently been but just lopped, was thrown across the torrent. A ruined keep, or donjon, was seen above a line of dark firs, crowning the summit of a steep crag, that rose abruptly from the river.

"This is our halfway-house," said Michael, pointing to the grim fortress:—"the children are tired, and have need of refreshment. Tarry here with the horses, whilst I carry them over the bridge."

"We have refreshments in the wallet—what need we to loiter yonder?" replied Anthony, eyeing the other with an expression of distrust.

"The children want rest," said Michael. "and we shall there find shelter from the heat."

"If rest be needful," was the reply, "surely this dry sward, and these overhanging leaves, will afford both rest and shelter."

"The children are in my keeping," said Michael fiercely, "and I am not to account with thee for my proceedings. Alight, and give me the child."

"I will not!—Michael, I have watched thee, and I know that thou art a villain. Ay, draw—I have weapons too, comrade."

Fast and furious grew the combat, during which the terrified children made the woods echo with their shrieks. The result was not long doubtful. Michael soon proved himself the better swordsman; and his antagonist, stumbling from fatigue, broke his own weapon in the fall. Defenceless, and exposed, the uplifted sword of his adversary was raised for his destruction—when, suddenly, the arm of the ruffian was arrested, the weapon snatched from his

grasp, and a female figure, habited in a dark and coarse vestment, stood between the combatants. Her brow was bare, and her dark, full eye beamed on them with a look of pity and of anger. Her naturally pale cheek was flushed; but it betrayed not the agitation she endured. Erect and unbending, she stood before them, and the quailing miscreant crouched at her feet.

"Away to thy master!—thy blood, too worthless even for thine own steel."———

She hurled away the weapon as she spoke.

Burning with revenge at his late defeat, Anthony flew after the falling brand: seizing it, he renewed the attack. Michael fled towards the bridge. With the bound of a bereaved tiger, Anthony sprung upon his prey. Just where the root of the trunk rested on the bank, they closed, after a desperate lunge, parried by the unprotected arm of Michael. It was disabled—but he still clung to his enemy. Anthony strove to disengage himself; but the other, aware that life or death depended on the issue of that struggle, hung on him with a convulsive tightness, that rendered the advantage he had gained of no avail. The sword was useless. Anthony threw it into the boiling gulf at his feet. Both hands being now free, whilst one arm of his opponent hung powerless and bleeding at his side, he had greatly the advantage. He wrenched the other arm of Michael from its hold, lifted him from his narrow footing-place, and with a malignant shout of triumph shook him over the abyss. One startling plunge, and the wretch sank in the rolling waters. An agonizing yell—and but one, escaped him, as he hung quivering over that yawning portal to eternity: the next cry was choked by the seethe of the boiling foam. The waves whirled him

round for a moment, like some huge leviathan tossing its prey. He sank into its gorge, and the insatiate gulf swallowed him up for ever. Anthony drew back. He turned from the horrid scene, with some yet lingering tokens of compunction, in the expectation of rejoining his companions—but in vain—the babes and his deliverer had disappeared!

Hildebrand Wentworth had passed the remainder of that day in his own chamber. It was a dark lone room, leading out of the turret we have before described. Often had he ascended the narrow stair communicating with the parapet, and often had he watched the dark woods beneath the distant mountain. It was the road taken by his guilty emissaries; and, whether on the look out for signals or for their return, he repeated his visits until the blue mists were gathering on the horizon, and day—another day!—had passed into the bosom of eternity. It was an hour of holiness and peace,—but heavy and disturbed was the current of his thoughts. He sat near a projecting angle of the turret, his head bent over the parapet. A female voice was heard beneath, chanting monotonously a low and melancholy psalm. Soon the following words were distinguished:—

"Dark as the bounding waters,
When storm-clouds o'er them roll,
The face of Zion's daughters
Reveals the troubled soul."

Hildebrand drew his breath, as if labouring under some violent emotion. His whole frame was agitated. His lip grew pale as she went on with a voice of exultation—

"But joy is sown in sadness,
And hope with anxious fears;
Yon clouds shall break in gladness,
And doubts dissolve in tears."

Fiends increase their torments at the sight of heaven! Hildebrand threw back his cloak,—with one clenched hand he struck his forehead, and with a loud groan he rushed from the spot. He sought rest in the gloom and solitude of his chamber; but hours passed on, during which the conscience-stricken culprit endured the horrors of accumulated guilt. Sometimes he opened the casement, gazing on the dark heavens, until he thought they were peopled, and he held converse with unseen and terrible things. Inarticulate murmurs broke from his lips.—A few words might occasionally be distinguished.—"Murder!—An old man, too.—The children—they are at rest!" A gleam of pleasure passed over his haggard features.

"I am now,"—looking round,—"now master—of all——"

"All?"—breathed a low voice in the chamber.

The cringing wretch was speechless.—Sense almost forsook him:—horror fastened on his spirit, while he turned his eyes, as if by some resistless constraint, towards the place from whence the voice had issued. Near his couch was a curiously-wrought cabinet inlaid with ivory and gems of the most costly workmanship. An heir-loom of the house, it was highly valued, and tradition reports that it was one of those spoils, on which our forefathers cast a longing glance in the wars of the Holy Sepulchre. Be this as it may, every document of value connected with the family was here deposited. By virtue of the power

given to him from the dying Sir Henry, though ostensibly for the benefit of his lady and her infant offspring, Hildebrand guarded the trust with a jealous eye. No one had access to it but himself, nor did he permit any other person than old Geoffery, the house steward, to visit his chamber.

Before this cabinet stood a figure enveloped in a dark robe. Pale, deadly pale, were the features, though scarcely discernible in their form and outline. The lamp burnt dimly; but with the quickened apprehension of guilt he recognised the wan resemblance of Lady Fairfax!

A cry of exhausted anguish escaped him, and he fell senseless on the floor.

Morning had risen, casting its bright and cheerful rays into the chamber, ere Hildebrand Wentworth awoke. Consciousness but slowly returned, and the events of the preceding hours came like shadows upon his soul. He stamped thrice, and immediately the vapid countenance of Geoffery Hardpiece was before him.

"Come hither, Hardpiece.—I am wondrous heavy and ill at ease."

"Why, master, your bed has not been disturbed these two nights.—How should there be any thing but an aching head and complaining bones, when——"

Hildebrand cast a hasty and confused glance towards the couch, as he replied,

"I have matters of moment just now, that weigh heavily on my spirit.—I cannot——"

Here was a short pause;—he continued, with a slow and tremulous accent—

"I hope the children are safe."

"Why, master," said Geoffery, "you have sent them out

of harm's way, I hope; but—I know not what ails me—an uneasy night of it I have had about them."

"What hast thou seen?" eagerly demanded Hildebrand.

"Seen! I have seen nothing, but I have been haunted at all quarters by a vast crowd of vexatious busy dreams—about cut-throats and murderers."

"Who says murderer?—I will have thee in the stocks."

Hildebrand attempted to lay hold on him as he spoke; but, accustomed to these outbreaks of temper, Master Hardpiece merely stepped on one side, still maintaining his usual forward and self-sufficient demeanour.

"Mr. Hildebrand Wentworth, when an old servant—"

"Peace!" interrupted his master:—"I am chafed beyond endurance." He struck his forehead violently,—but, suddenly recollecting himself, he seized Geoffery by the arm.

"What sawest thou last night, knave?"

"Only dreams, master—but——"

"Say on—what makes thee hesitate?"

"A messenger arrived last night."

"A messenger!—From whence?" eagerly demanded Hildebrand.

"Unluckily," said Geoffery," "it was shortly after you had retired for the night; I durst not then trouble you with the message. Marry, it's not the sort of news one likes to be in a hurry to tell."

"Go on, varlet."

"Why," continued the provoking simpleton, looking as if he had to reveal unpleasant tidings, and drawing back as he spoke,—"the bearer is in the train of some herald

or pursuivant, come from o'er sea to our court, about exchange of prisoners, and the like. This man has a message from Sir Henry Fairfax."

"He lies! I'll have his tongue bored!" furiously cried Hildebrand.

"Nay, but listen: he says Sir Henry, whom we all thought dead, is now alive, and a prisoner in some ugly old German fortress."

During this recital the astonished Hildebrand clenched his hands, with a look of awful and impotent rage. Hardpiece continued,—

"This coxcomb says, he was sent specially by Sir Henry to obtain from you some papers of great moment, which will ensure his immediate release. He bears Sir Henry's signet, and the knave hath no lack of assurance."

"Has this fellow had any communication with the menials, Geoffery?—or hast thou done me the service to keep him and his message to thyself?" anxiously enquired Hildebrand.

"Why, as touching that, Alice, some how or other,—for these women are always looking to any body's business but their own,—wormed out his message in part, before I was aware of her drift."

"Alice!—Again has that viper crossed my path!—Bid the messenger attend."

When Geoffery returned, he was followed by a short, muscular-looking personage, attired in a foreign garb. A military cloak, and slouched hat, garnished with a broad band and feather, gave him altogether an air of importance, which his bare exterior had not sustained. On entering he made a slight obeisance. Hildebrand watched his bearing, as if he would have searched him to the

heart's core. Not in the least disconcerted, the soldier threw himself on a seat. Preliminaries were waved by this unceremonious guest, who, speaking evidently in a foreign accent, began the interrogatory as follows: —

"You were the private secretary of Sir Henry Fairfax?"

"I was," briefly replied Hildebrand.

"Know you this signet?"

"I do," again he sullenly answered.

"It was given into my keeping," said the stranger, "as a token whereby Hildebrand Wentworth should, in the due exercise of his fealty and trust, commit to my charge certain documents that shall immediately be set forth. But first, and briefly, it may be needful to relate the manner in which Sir Henry recovered after your departure. On the day following the skirmish, wherein Sir Henry was supposed to be mortally wounded, he gave unto you, as his most valued and bosom friend, those solemn credentials, by which, as a dying man, he invested you with full powers to proceed to England, as the sole guardian and protector of his beloved wife and their infant offspring. The goods and effects of which he died the possessor were vested in your name, I believe, in trust for her benefit and the surviving children. I think I am right in this? In case of their death, though, I believe the property became yours."

"It did."

"Such was the nature of the wound, that his physicians believed a few hours only could intervene before his dissolution. He urged your immediate departure. Shortly afterwards the whole camp-equipage, together with the sick and wounded, fell into the hands of his enemies.

Driven off to a considerable distance up the Rhine at full speed, and without any other comforts or necessaries than what his captors could supply, his wounds bleeding afresh, and every limb racked with pain, to the astonishment of all he speedily recovered; and from that time he has remained a close prisoner in the fortress. Not receiving any tidings from his native shores, he knows not his loss. Yesternight only I heard of Lady Fairfax's most lamentable decease. In a cartel lately arrived for negociating an exchange of prisoners, Sir Henry sends by me, secretly, as one of the envoys, a requisition for the papers I have before mentioned. His name, by some mistake, perhaps, not being included in the lists for exchange, has induced him so to act. The credentials, which he will thus be enabled through me to present, will doubtless accomplish his release, and restore him to his family and to his home. They are papers of great moment, and will set forth claims which cannot be overlooked: and I have most minute and special instructions to get them laid before the council."

"Where are these precious documents deposited?" said Hildebrand.

"An Eastern cabinet of choice and costly workmanship, containing other records of great value, stands in Sir Henry's private chamber." The envoy looked round, and his eyes rested on the cabinet. "The outer doors being opened, there are seen two ranges of drawers, with their separate mountings and compartments, each containing materials of greater or less moment. Sir Henry was minute in his directions, lest his lady might be absent; and the innermost secrets of this goodly tabernacle not being known, save to themselves, the object of my visit might

be retarded. With the permission of Hildebrand Wentworth, I will describe minutely where he may find this deposit."

Hildebrand slightly moved his head, and the speaker continued,—

"From Sir Henry's description, and the tracings which he drew on the floor of his cell, I should conceive that this room contains the object of our search. I will recount the memoranda that I made, lest memory should be unfaithful. When the third cover is unclosed, in the lowest part of the recess on the right hand, beneath a sliding panel, is a spring, on touching which the whole flies back, and discovers a rare device, beautifully wrought in arabesque relief. So far, in all likelihood, you, being his confidential secretary, have beheld?"

"I have seen this cunning work thou speakest of:—what more?"

"Embellishing the four corners thereof is the likeness of a hand, curiously chased in silver; the second joint on the third finger of the lowest of them, on the left, being pressed, the whole picture, by marvellous sleight and artifice, riseth up, revealing the treasure, of which I am in search."

"Hath Sir Henry sent no written message, that we may know his will in this matter?" enquired Hildebrand.

"It is strictly forbidden to a prisoner," replied the other, "to use tablets; but my knowledge of the secret is a sufficient safeguard against imposture."

"Retire: I will begin the search with all speed. But hold thyself in readiness for immediate departure. Thou wilt not have the worse thrift for a hasty dismissal."

The stranger withdrew, accompanied by Hardpiece. Hildebrand listened to their retreating footsteps; when, like unto one possessed, he stamped and tore his thin grey locks; and cursed, audibly and bitterly cursed, his destiny.

"Hast thou escaped?—when the draught danced and bubbled over my parched lips, Fate—fortune, whatever thou art, I would curse thee!"

As he spoke, he lifted up one clenched hand towards Heaven, laden with imprecation. And why did not that Power, whose vengeance he visibly defied, launch a bolt against the impious?—Why not render him, in that very act, a monument of just and righteous retribution?—"*Shall not the judge of the whole earth do right?*" is a master-key that unlocks the mysteries and ministrations of Divine Providence, however complicated in their nature, and obscure in their design.

As the hoary sinner withdrew his hand, suddenly the muscles of his face relaxed,—a ray of hope had irradiated his spirit,—a gleam of delight passed over his pale features. He grew calm, and with a firm step he strode across the apartment. He approached the cabinet.

"Thou shalt not escape me now!"—As he said this, he threw open the doors. Hildebrand had often searched this depository, but the place of concealment pointed out by the stranger had hitherto escaped his notice. He soon detected the stratagem—the lid flew back; but the papers of which he was in search were gone!

The spirit of mischief was again foiled, but his evil genius did not forsake him. He sat down, and, for purposes of the blackest malignity, forged a series of evidences,—a development of plans and proceedings that would at

once have branded Sir Henry as a coward and a traitor. These letters he sealed up, and, calling for the messenger, committed the packet into his hands.

"You have Sir Henry's orders to lay these before the king?" said Hildebrand.

"I have," replied the envoy.

"Then hasten to court, and so good speed. Stay—when you meet Sir Henry Fairfax, offer him an old man's sympathy and condolence. Break the matter to him tenderly—and when he returns—I say no more. Away—thy mission hath need of despatch."

The soldier made a slight inclination of the head as he departed.

Hildebrand Wentworth sat down to reap the fruits of his villany—a harvest of his own planting. The full fruition of it he now seemed ready to enjoy; but days and weeks passed by, and still found him feverish and anxious. The fate of the children,—whether the work of destruction had, or had not been accomplished,—was still to him a matter of uncertainty. He had often sent in search of the ruffians, but they had not been seen at their usual haunts. Guilt whispered that all was not complete. Restless, and oppressed by undefined and terrible apprehensions, he resolved to end his doubts, and, if possible, procure an interview. He expected to obtain some clue to their proceedings by a visit to the tower.

It was not far from the close of a bright summer's day, when he gained the rude bridge below the waterfall. He shuddered as he looked on the narrow trunk, and the ever-tossing gulph beneath. The blackness of darkness was upon his spirit, and he ran as if some demon had pursued him, climbing with almost breathless haste the steep and

winding staircase that gave access from the bridge to the ruined fortress above.

From the platform a narrow ledge of rock led to the ditch, now dry, and nearly filled with fragments from the ruins. He passed the tottering arch of the portcullis:—long weeds choked up the entrance, waving drearily, as the light breeze went over them. Hildebrand heard not the moan of the coming blast. Evening approached, and a thousand shadows haunted him,—grim spectres that crossed his path, crowding upon him with anger and menace. From a ruined door-way he ascended a narrow stair, and had penetrated far into the interior of that part of the castle which, in some measure, remained entire, when, for the first time, he seemed startled into a consciousness of his situation. It was an appalling scene of solitude and decay. The realities, to which he almost instantaneously awoke, might have awed a less guilty spirit than that which inhabited the bosom of Hildebrand Wentworth. A long gallery, supported by huge pillars, terminated in the distance by a long and narrow oriel. On each side, broken but richly-variegated windows threw down a many-tinted light, which, oppressed by the dark and caverned arches, gave a strange and mysterious character to the grotesque reflections hovering on the floor. Narrow streams of light flitted across the dense vapours, visible only in their gleam. Involuntarily did Hildebrand pass on: impelled, as if by some unseen but resistless power, he durst not retrace his footsteps. His tread was slow and fearful, as he traversed the long and dreary vista. Every sense was now in full exercise;—his faculties becoming more acute by the extremity of terror he endured. His ear caught the slightest sound—his eye, the least

motion that glimmered across his path. Sometimes a terrific shape seemed to glide past:—he brushed the cold and clammy damps from his brow, and it vanished.

'Suddenly a door opened at the extremity of the gallery, and a faint light streamed from the crevice. Voices,—children's voices, were heard in the chamber. He rushed onward. Rage,—frantic and uncontrolled, possessed him, as he beheld the babes—the intended victims of his avarice, in all the bloom of health and innocence, unconscious of danger, bounding through the apartment, together with their nurse and protector, Alice! Goaded by his insatiate tormentor, he drew a poniard from his vest, and rushed on the unoffending objects of his hate. Alice shrieked; she attempted to throw herself between them and their foe, but was too far off to accomplish her purpose. His arm was too sure, and his stroke too sudden. But ere the steel could pierce his victims, it was arrested. He looked round, and a female figure, loosely enveloped in a dark cloak, had rescued them from death. It was the same form that had before interposed between them and the fangs of their remorseless enemy. Loosened by the sudden spring, her garment flew aside. Hildebrand gazed silently, but with a look of horror, too wild and intense to be portrayed. He seemed to recognise the intruder—his lips moved rapidly while he spoke.

"Thee!—whom the waves had swallowed——Have the waters given up their dead?"—he faintly exclaimed, almost gasping for utterance.

"Monster! canst thou look upon this form," she cried, "and not wither at the sight?—But I have done," she meekly continued: "Heaven hath yet a blessing for the innocent:—but thy cup of iniquity is full. Thy doom is

at hand.—I have trusted thee, O my Father; and I trust thee still!"

It was the much injured and persecuted wife of Sir Henry Fairfax who now stood before the abashed miscreant.

"Away!" she cried; "to Heaven I leave my vengeance and thy crime. Hence—to thy home! Thine, did I say? Soon, monster, shalt thou be chased from thy lair, and the wronged victim regain his right."

Hildebrand, awed and confounded, retraced his path, brooding over some more cunning stratagem to ensure his prey. He had passed the bridge, and, on attempting to remount his steed, his attention was directed to a cloud of dust, and a pale flash of arms in the evening light. Two horsemen drew nigh—their steeds studded with gouts of foam, and in an instant one of them alighted before the traitor. It was Sir Henry Fairfax! "Have I caught thee?" cried the knight.—"What mischief art thou here a perpetrating? Seize that villain!"

In a moment, Hildebrand was denied all chance of escape.

"Thy machinations are defeated—thy villanies revealed, and vengeance demands a hasty recompense."

Hildebrand prostrated himself on the ground, in the most abject humiliation, and besought mercy.

"I will not harm thee, wretch," exclaimed the gallant knight: "to a higher power I leave the work of retribution. The ministers of justice await thee at my castle. I came hither first to seek my wife!—Lead the way; thou shalt be witness to our meeting—wife, children, all.—Our bliss will to thee be misery, that the most refined tortures could not inflict. On—on."

Hildebrand, with imbecile agony, grasped at the very stones for succour. He then rushed towards the bridge, and, ere his purpose could be anticipated, with one wild yell precipitated himself into the waters!

A few lines will suffice by way of explanation to this unlooked-for termination of their sufferings.

When Lady Fairfax fled from the castle, in order to elude his search,—for Hildebrand had the audacity to threaten by force to make her his wife,—she threw off her cloak and head-dress, laying them on the river's brink, that it might appear as though she had accomplished her own destruction. To the care of the faithful Alice she had committed her children, and likewise the secret of her concealment. Alice was in continual correspondence with her unfortunate mistress; and great was the joy and exultation with which she communicated the arrival of a messenger from her lord, whom she had long mourned as dead. Providentially, no interview took place between Hildebrand and the stranger on the night of his arrival: and sufficient time intervened to enable Lady Fairfax to make a desperate attempt, in the hope of gaining possession of the papers for which he had been sent. She well knew Hildebrand would not relinquish the possession of credentials that might ensure his lord's return. It was Lady Fairfax who had alarmed him the same night by her appearance in his chamber. She hoped to have found him asleep; but was enabled to get possession of the writings through his timidity and surprise. With these she met the envoy, as he was returning from the castle. Disclosing all the tortuous and daring villany of Hildebrand, she committed the real documents to his care, instructing him, at the same time, to lay before her sovereign the

narrative of her wrongs. Soon was the captivity of Sir Henry terminated: and joy, heightened by recollection of the past, and chastened by the severity of their misfortunes, attended them through the remainder of their earthly career.

THE

PHANTOM VOICE.

"He heerde a sunde but noughte he zee,
No touche upon his fleshe ther came;
Bot a swedderin winde smot heavilee,
And heavilee brenn'd the fleckerin flame."

OLD BALLAD.

Drawn by G. Pickering.

Engraved by Edwd Finden.

SOUTH PORT.

London. Published by Longman & Co 1829.

THE

PHANTOM VOICE.

THE following tradition, like some of the preceding legends, has been found, under various modifications and disguises, connected with local scenery, and attaching itself in the mind of the hearer to well-known places and situations with which he may have been familiar.

SOUTHPORT, a bathing-place of great resort on the Lancashire coast, has been pointed out as the scene of the following tragedy, which probably occurred long before its salubrity and convenience for sea-bathing had rendered this barren tract of sand the site of a populous and thriving hamlet. From the mildness and congeniality of the air to persons of weak and relaxed habits, it has been not inaptly termed "the Montpelier of England."

But "the coast is probably as dangerous for shipping as any round the kingdom. The sand-banks extend in a northwesterly direction for at least six miles, so as to render the navigation extremely difficult, even to the natives, and impracticable for strangers. Hence shipwrecks are very frequent;" and "in a coming tide, accompanied by a strong westerly wind, it is almost impossible for boats to put off or to live in the sea."

"It not unfrequently happens that these accidents occur in the night-time, in very hazy weather, or at ebb tide. In the latter case, it is necessary for boats to be taken in carts over the sands down to low water-mark, before any assistance can be attempted."

"If the captain of the vessel be obstinate, and trust to his own skill, he increases the danger. When the crews of the vessels take to their own boats, and disobey the directions of the Southport pilots, their jeopardy is tenfold greater, and their loss almost inevitable." *

Nearly one hundred vessels have been wrecked on this coast within the last thirty years, and more than half of them totally lost. Of these calamities the particulars are upon record. Which of them may have given rise to the events here detailed we have no means of ascertaining.

* Glazebrook's Southport.

THE

PHANTOM VOICE.

It was at the close of a bright and memorable evening in October, that I had carelessly flung the reins upon the neck of my horse, as I traversed the bare and almost interminable sands skirting the Lancashire coast.

On my right, a succession of low sand hills, drifted by the partial and unsteady blasts, skirted the horizon, their summits strongly marked upon the red and lowering sky in an undulating and scarcely-broken outline. Behind them, I heard the vast and busy waters, rolling on, like the voice of the coming tempest. Here and there, some rude and solitary hut rose above the red hillocks, bare and unprotected: no object of known dimensions being near, by which its true magnitude might be estimated, the eye seemed to exaggerate its form upon the mind in almost gigantic proportions. As twilight drew on, the deception increased; and, starting occasionally from the influence of some lacerating thought, I beheld, perchance, some huge and turreted fortress, or a pile of misshapen battlements, rising beyond the hills like the grim castles of romance, or the air-built shadows of fairy land. Night was fast closing; I was alone, out of the beaten

track, amidst a desert and thinly-inhabited region; a perfect stranger, I had only the superior sagacity of my steed to look to for safety and eventual extrication from this perilous labyrinth.

The way, if such it might be called, threading the mazes through a chain of low hills, and consisting only of a loose and ever-shifting bed of dry sand, grew every moment more and more perplexed. Had it been daylight, there appeared no object by which to direct my course,—no mark that might distinguish whether or not my path was in a right line or a circle: I seemed to be rambling through a succession of amphitheatres formed by the sand-hills, every one so closely resembling its neighbour that I could not recognise any decided features on which to found that distinction of ideas which philosophers term individuality. In almost any other mood of the mind, this would have been a puzzling and disagreeable dilemma; but at that moment it appeared of the least possible consequence to me where the dark labyrinth might terminate.

Striving to escape from thought, from recollection, the wild and cheerless monotony of my path seemed to convey a desperate stillness to the mind, to quench in some measure the fiery outburst of my spirit. It was but a deceitful calm—the deadening lull of spent anguish; I awoke to a keener sense of misery, from which there was no escape.

But it was not to lament over my own griefs that I commenced my story. Let the dust of oblivion cover them; I would not pain another by the recital. There are sorrows—short ages of agony—into the dark origin of which none would dare to pry; one heart alone feels, hides, and nourishes them for ever!

Night now came on, heavy and dark; not a star twinkled above me; I seemed to have left the habitations of men. In whatever direction I turned, not a light was visible; all fellowship with my kind had vanished. No sound broke the unvarying stillness, but the heavy plunge of my horse's feet and the hollow moan of the sea. Gradually I began to rouse from my stupor: awaking, as from a dream, my senses grew rapidly conscious of the perils by which I was surrounded. I knew not but some hideous gulf awaited me, or the yawning sea, towards which I fancied my course tended, was destined to terminate this adventure. It was chiefly, however, a feeling of loneliness, a dread, unaccountable in its nature, that seemed to haunt me. There was nothing so very uncommon or marvellous in my situation; yet the horror I endured is unutterable. The demon of fear seemed to possess my frame, and benumbed every faculty. I saw, or thought I saw, shapes hideous and indistinct rising before me, but so rapidly that I could not trace their form ere they vanished. I felt convinced it was the mind that was perturbed, acting outwardly upon the senses, rendered more than usually irritable by the alarm and excitation they had undergone—yet I could not shake off the spell. I heard a sharp rustling past my ear; I involuntarily raised my hand; but nothing met my touch save the damp and chilly hair about my temples. I tried to rally myself out of these apprehensions—but in vain: reason has little chance of succeeding when fear has gained the ascendancy. I durst not quicken my pace, lest I should meet with some obstruction; judging it most prudent to allow my steed to grope out his path in the way best suited to his own sagacity. Suddenly he made a dead halt. No effort or

persuasion could induce him to stir. I was the more surprised, from knowing his generally docile and manageable temper. He seemed immoveable, and moreover, as I thought in the attitude of listening. I, too, listened eagerly—intensely; my senses sharpened to the keenest perception of sound.

The moan of the sea came on incessantly as before; no other sound could be distinguished. Again I tried to urge him forward; but the attempt was fruitless. I now fancied that there might be some dangerous gulf or precipice just at his feet, and that the faithful animal was unwilling to plunge himself and his rider into immediate destruction. I dismounted, and, with the bridle at arm's length, carefully stepped forward a few paces, but I could find no intimation of danger; the same deep and level bed of sand seemed to continue onwards, without any shelving or declivity whatever. Was the animal possessed? He still refused to proceed, but the cause remained inscrutable. A sharp and hasty snort, with a snuffing of the wind in the direction of the sea, now pointed out the quarter towards which his attention was excited. His terror seemed to increase, and with it my own. I knew not what to anticipate. He evidently began to tremble, and again I listened. Fancy plays strange freaks, or I could have imagined there was something audible through the heavy booming of the sea—a more distinct, and, as it were, articulate sound—though manifestly at a considerable distance. There was nothing unusual in this—perhaps the voice of the fisherman hauling out his boat, or of some mariner heaving the anchor. But why such terror betrayed by the irrational brute, and apparently proceeding from this source? for it was manifest that some connexion existed

between the impulses of the sound now undulating on the wind, and the alarm of my steed. The cause of all this apprehension soon grew more unequivocal—it was evidently approaching. From the sea there seemed to come, at short intervals, a low and lengthened shout, like the voice of one crying out for help or succour. Presently the sounds assumed a more distinct and definite articulation. "Murder!—Murder!" were the only words that were uttered, but in a tone and with an expression of agony I shall never forget. It was not like any thing akin to humanity, but an unearthly, and, if I may so express it, a sepulchral shriek—like a voice from the grave.

I crept closer to my steed: nature, recoiling from contact with the approaching phantom, prompted me thus intuitively to cling to any thing that had life. I felt a temporary relief, even from the presence of the terrified beast, though I could distinctly perceive him shuddering, yet fixed to the spot. The voice now came on rapidly; it was but a few paces distant. I felt as though I was the sport and prey of thoughts too horrible for utterance. Alone, I had to cope with the Evil One;—or I was already, perhaps, the victim of some diabolical agency. The yell was close upon my ear; I felt the clammy breath of the grave across my face, and the sound swept by. It slowly arose;—but the agony of the cry was more intense—more sharp and vehement the shriek of "murder!" Grown bolder, or perhaps more desperate, I cried out, "Where, in the name of——?"—I had scarcely uttered the words, when a loud rushing cleft the air, and a crash followed, as though some heavy body had fallen at my feet. The horse burst from his bonds, galloping from me

at full speed, and I stood alone! In this appalling extremity, I approached the object of my fears. I bent to the ground;—stretching out my hand, my fingers rested on the cold and clammy features of a corpse! I well remember the deep groan that burst from my lips;—nature had reached the extremity of endurance—I felt a sudden rush of blood to the heart, and fell beside my ghastly companion, equally helpless and insensible.

I have no means of ascertaining the duration of this swoon; but, with returning recollection, I again put out my hand, which rested on the cold and almost naked carcass beside me. I felt roused by the touch, and started on my feet—the moon, at this instant emerging from a mass of dark clouds, streamed full on the dead body, pale and blood-stained, the features distorted, as if by some terrible death. Fear now prompted me to fly: I ran as if the wind had lent me wings—not daring to look back, lest my eyes should again rest on the grisly form I had just left. I fled onwards for some time; the moon now enabling me to follow the beaten track, which, to my great joy, brought me suddenly, at the turn of a high bank, within sight of a cheerful fire gleaming through a narrow door, seemingly the entrance to some wayside tavern. Bursts of hilarity broke from the interior; the voice of revelry and mirth came upon my ear, as though I was just awakening from a dream. It was as if I had heard the dead laugh in their cold cerements. As I stept across the threshold, the boisterous roar of mirth made me shudder; and it seemed, by the alarm visible in the countenances of the guests, that my appearance presented something as terrible to their apprehensions. Every eye was fixed on me, as I seated myself by a

vacant table; and I heard whisperings, with suspicious glances occasionally directed towards the place where I sat. The company, however, soon began to get the better of their consternation, and were evidently not pleased at so unseasonable an interruption to their mirth. I found that some explanation was necessary as to the cause of my intrusion, and with difficulty made them comprehend the nature of my alarm. I craved their assistance for the removal of the body; promising, if possible, to conduct them to the spot where the miserable victim was thrown. They stared at each other during this terrible announcement; and, at the conclusion, I found every one giving his neighbour credit for the requisite portion of courage, though himself, at the same time, declining to participate in the hazards of the undertaking.

"Roger towd me 'at he stood i' th' churchyard, wi' shoon-bottoms uppermost, looking for the wench he wur to wed through the windows: I'se sure he'll make noa bauk at a bogle."

"Luk thee, Jim, I canna face the dead; but I wunna shew my back to a live fist; the best and the biggest o' the country side.—Wilt' smell, my lad?"

Roger, mortified at this test of his courage, raised his clenched hand in a half-threatening attitude. A serious quarrel might have ensued, had not a sudden stop been put to the proceedings of the belligerents, by an interesting girl stepping before me, modestly enquiring where I had left the corpse; and offering herself as a companion, if these mighty cowards could not muster sufficient courage.

"Shame on thee, Will!" she cried, directing her speech to a young man who sat concealed by the shadow of the projecting chimney;—"shame on thee, I say; to be

o'erfaced by two or three hard words. I'se gangin,—follow 'at dare."

Saying this, she took down a huge horn lantern, somewhat dilapidated in the outworks, and burnt in various devices, causing a most unprofitable privation of light. A bonnet and cloak, hastily thrown on, completed her costume; and, surrendering the creaking lantern to my care, she stood for a moment contemplating the dingy atmosphere before she stept forth to depart. During these ominous preparations, a smart sailor-looking man, whose fear of his mistress' displeasure had probably overcome his dread of the supernatural, placed himself between me and the maiden, and taking her by the arm, crustily told me that if I could point out the way, he was prepared to follow;—rather a puzzling matter for a stranger, who scarcely knew whether his way lay right or left from the very threshold. Thus admirably qualified for a guide, I agreed to make the attempt, being determined to spare no pains, in the hope of discovering the object of our search.

Company breeds courage. Several of the guests, finding how matters stood, and that the encounter was not likely to be made single-handed, volunteered their attendance; so that our retinue was shortly augmented to some half dozen stout fellows. The vanguard was composed of myself and the lovers; the rest crept close in our rear, forming their rank as broad as the nature of the ground would admit.

Luckily I soon found the jutting bank, round which I had turned on my first view of the house we had just left. We proceeded in silence,—except that a whisper occasionally arose from one of the rearmost individuals talking

to his bolder neighbour in front, when finding his own courage on the wane. Following for some time what appeared to be the traces of recent footsteps, I hoped, yet almost feared, that every moment I might stumble on the bleeding corpse. An attendant in the rear now gave the alarm;—something he saw moving on our left, causing him to make a desperate struggle to get before his companions. This produced a universal uproar—each fighting for precedency, and thoroughly determined not to be the last. I soon beheld a dark object moving near, and the next minute I was overjoyed to find my recreant steed, quietly searching amongst the tufted moss and sea-reed for a scanty supper. My associates knew not what to make of this discovery. Some of them, I believe, eyed him with deep suspicion; and more than one glance was given at his hoofs, to see if they were not cloven.

Order, however, being re-established, we again set forward with what proved a useful auxiliary to our train. We had not travelled far, ere I was again aware of the peculiar snort by which he manifested his alarm; and it was with difficulty I got him onwards a few paces, when he stood still, his head drawn back, as if from some object that lay in his path. I knew the cause of his terror, and, giving the bridle to one of my attendants, cautiously proceeded, followed by the maiden and her lover; who, to do him justice, showed a tolerable share of courage—at any rate, in the presence of his mistress. At length I recognised the spot, where, yet unmoved, lay the bleeding carcass. The girl started when she beheld the grim features, horribly drawn together and convulsed, as if in the last agony. I was obliged to muster the requisite fortitude to attempt its removal; and, raising it from the

sand, with a little assistance I placed it across the horse, though not without a most determined opposition on the part of the animal. Throwing a cloak over the body, we made the best of our way back; and, on arriving at the house, I found that the only vacant apartment where I could deposit my charge was a narrow loft over the out-house, the entrance to which was both steep and dangerous. With the assistance of my two friends, though with considerable difficulty, it was in the end deposited there, upon a miserable pallet of straw, over which we threw a tattered blanket. On returning, I found the guest-room deserted: the old woman to whom the tavern belonged —the mother, as I afterwards found, of my female companion—was hastily clearing away the drinking utensils, and preparing for an immediate removal to the only apartment above stairs which bore the honours of the bed-chamber. She kindly offered me the use of it for the night; but this sacrifice of comfort I could not allow; and, throwing my cloak over a narrow bench, I drew it near the fire, determining to snatch a brief interval of rest, without robbing the good woman and her daughter of their night's repose.

It was now past midnight; sleep was out of the question, as I lay ruminating on the mysterious events of the few past hours. The extraordinary manner in which the murdered wretch had been committed to my care, seemed an imperative call upon me to attempt the discovery of some foul and horrible crime. With the returning day I resolved to begin my enquiries, and I vowed to compass sea and land ere I gave up the pursuit. So absorbed was I in the project, that I scarcely noticed the storm, now bursting forth in a continuous roll from the sea, until one

wild gust, that seemed to rush by as if it would have swept the dwelling from its seat, put an end to these anticipations. I watched the rattling casement, expecting every moment that it would give way, and the groaning thatch be rent from its hold. Involuntarily I arose, and approached the window. It was pitchy dark, and the roar of the sea, under the terrific sweep of the tempest, was truly awful. Never had I heard so terrible a conflict. I knew not how soon I might be compelled to quit this unstable shelter; the very earth shook; and every moment I expected the frail tenement would be levelled to its foundations. The eddying and unequal pressure of the wind heaped a huge sand-drift against the walls, which probably screened them from the full force of the blast, acting at the same time as a support to their feeble consistency; sand and earthy matter were driven about and tossed against the casement, insomuch that I almost anticipated a living inhumation. The next gust, however, generally swept off the greater portion of the deposit, making way for a fresh torrent, that poured upon the quaking roof like the rush of a heavy sea over a ship's bulwarks.

"I was not destined to be left companionless in the midst of my alarms. The old woman and her daughter, too much terrified to remain quiet, came down from their resting-place, which, being close within the thatch, was more exposed to the tempest. A light was struck, and the dying embers once more kindled into a blaze. The old woman, whom I could not but observe with emotions of awe and curiosity, sat cowering over the flame, her withered hands half covering her furrowed and haggard cheeks; a starting gleam occasionally lighted up her grey

and wasted locks, which, matted in wild elf-knots, hung about her temples. Occasionally she would turn her head, as the wind came hurrying on, and the loud rush of the blast went past the dwelling. She seemed to gaze upon it as though 't were peopled, and she beheld the "sightless coursers of the air" careering on the storm; then, with a mutter and a groan, she again covered her face, rocking to and fro to the chant of some wild and unintelligible ditty. Her daughter sat nearly motionless, hearkening eagerly during the short intervals between the gusts; and, as the wind came bellowing on, she huddled closer into the chimney-corner, whither she had crept for protection.

"Such nights are not often known in these parts," said I, taking advantage, as I spoke, of a pause in the warfare without. The old woman made no answer; but the daughter, bending forwards, replied slowly and with great solemnity:—"Mother has seen the death-lights dancing upo' the black scud: some ha' seen the sun sink down upon the waters that winna' see him rise again fro' the hill-top."

"Is your mother a seer, then, my pretty maiden?"

"Ye're but a stranger, I guess, if ye know not Bridget o' the Sandy Holm—Save us! she's hearkening again for the ——"

"There!—Once!" The old woman raised her hands as she spoke, and bent her head in an attitude of listening and eager expectation. I listened too, but could discover no sound, save the heavy swing of the blast, and its receding growl.

"Again!"—As she said this, Bridget rose from the low stool she had occupied, and hobbled towards the window.

I thought a signal-gun was just then audible, as from some vessel in distress. Ere I could communicate this intelligence, another and a nearer roll silenced all conjecture. It was indeed but too evident that a vessel was in the offing, and rapidly driving towards the shore, from the increasing distinctness of the signals.

Old Bridget stood by the window; her dim and anxious eyes peering through the casement, as if she could discern the fearful and appalling spectacle upon the dark billows.

"Your last!—your last, poor wretches!" she cried, when a heavy gust brought another report with amazing distinctness to the ear. "And now the death-shriek!—another, and another!—ye drop into the deep waters, and the gulf is not gorged with its prey. Bridget Rimmer, girl and woman, has ne'er watched the blue dancers but she has heard the sea-gun follow, and seen the red sand decked with the spoil—Wench, take not of the prey; 't is accursed!"

The beldame drew back after uttering this anathema, and again resumed her station near the hearth.

The storm now seemed to abate, and, as if satisfied with the mischief at this moment consummating, the wind grew comparatively calm. The gusts came by fitfully, like the closing sobs of some fretful and peevish babe, not altogether ceasing with the indulgence of its wishes. As I stood absorbed in a reverie, the nature of which I cannot now accurately determine, the maiden gently touched my arm.

"Sir, will ye walk to the shore? I'se warrant the neighbours are helping, and we may save a life though we canna gie it."

She was wrapped in a thick cloak, the hood thrown forward, and the horn lantern again put in requisition, fitted up for immediate service. We opened the door with considerable difficulty, and waded slowly through the heavy sand-drifts towards the beach. The clouds, shattered and driven together in mountainous heaps, were rolling along the sky, a dark scud sweeping over their huge tops, here and there partially illuminated by the moonbeams: the moon was still obscured, but a wild and faint light, usually seen after the breaking up of a storm, just served to show the outline of objects not too remote from our sphere of vision.

My companion soon brought me to an opening in the hills, which led directly down to the beach. Immediately I saw lights before us, moving to and fro, and the busy hum of voices came upon the wind; forms were indistinctly seen hurrying backward and forward upon the very verge of the white foam boiling from the huge billows. Hastening to the spot, we found a number of fishermen—their wives assisting in the scrutiny—carefully examining the fragments of wreck which the waves were from time to time casting up, and throwing with a heavy lunge upon the shore. Either for purposes of plunder, or for the more ostensible design of contributing to their preservation, sundry packages were occasionally conveyed away, subsequently to an eager examination of their contents. My associate ran into the thickest of the group, anxiously enquiring as to the fate of the crew, and if any lives had been preserved.

"I guess," cried an old hard-featured sinner, "they be where they'll need no lookin' after. Last brast' o' wind, six weeks agone next St. Barnaby, I gied my cabin to the

lady and her children—an' the pains I waur like to ha' for my labour—I didn't touch a groat till the parson gied me a guinea out o' th' 'scription; but I may trot gaily hoam to-night. There 's no live lumber to stow i' my loft; the fishes ha' the pick o' the whole cargo this bout."

"Canna we get the boats?—I can pull an oar, thou knows, Darby, wi' the best on 'em," enquired the female.

"Boats!" exclaimed Darby; "ne'er a boat would live but wi' keel uppermost—I 'se not the chap to go to Davy Jones to-night pickled i' brine, my pratty Kate."

"Thou 'rt a greedy glead;—I 'se go ask Simon; but I 'll warrant thou 'lt be hankering after the reward, and the biggest share to thine own clutches."

She turned away from the incensed fisherman; and, proceeding to a short distance, we found a knot of persons gathered around a half-drowned wretch, who owed his appearance again upon land to having been lashed on some lumber, which the sea had just cast ashore. Almost fainting from cold and exhaustion, he was undergoing a severe questioning from the by-standers—every one wishing to know the name of the ship, whither bound, and the whole particulars of the disaster. We just came in time for his release; and I soon had the satisfaction to find the poor fellow in my quarters, before a comfortable fire, his clothes drying, and his benumbed limbs chafed until the circulation was again pretty nigh restored. After drinking a tumbler of grog, he appeared to recover rapidly; and we found, on enquiry, that he was master of the vessel just wrecked on the coast. He shook his head on a further enquiry as to the fate of her crew. "A score as good hands," said he, "are gone to the bottom as ever unreefed a clean topsail, or hung out a ship's canvass to the wind—

I saw them all go down as I lashed myself to the jib." He groaned deeply; but, speedily assuming a gayer tone, requested a quid and a quiet hammock. "My lights are nearly stove in,—my head hangs as loose as a Dutchman's shrouds; a night's sleep will make all taut again."

Old Bridget was gone to bed; and unless the sailor chose to occupy the straw pallet already in the possession of a guest, whose mysterious arrival seemed to be the forerunner of nothing but confusion and disaster, there did not seem any chance of obtaining a birth, save by remaining in his present situation. I told him of the dilemma; but Kate replied,—"We can just take the body fro' the bed; it winna' tak' harm upo' the chest i' the fur' nook. The captain will not, may-be, sleep the waur' for quiet company."

He did not seem to relish the idea of passing the night even with so quiet a companion; but, as it seemed the least disagreeable alternative, we agreed to pilot him to the chamber, and help the miserable pallet to change occupants. The corpse we agreed to lay on some clean litter, used for the bedding of the cattle. We conducted the stranger to his dormitory, which was formerly a hay-loft, until converted into an occasional sleeping-room for the humble applicants who sometimes craved a night's lodging at the Sandy Holm.

The only entrance was by a crazy ladder, and so steep, that I was afraid our feeble companion would find considerable difficulty in climbing to his chamber. It was my intention to have prevented him from getting a sight of the ghastly object that occupied his couch; but, pressing foremost, he ran up the ladder with surprising agility,

gaining the top ere I had made preparations for the ascent. I mounted cautiously, giving him the light whilst I made good my landing; and he went directly to the bed. I had set my foot on the floor, and was lending a hand to Kate, who had still to contend with the difficulties of the way, when I heard a dismal and most appalling shriek. Starting round, I beheld the stranger gazing on the couch; his eyeballs almost bursting from their sockets, and his countenance distorted with horror and amazement. I ran to him, as the light dropped from his grasp—catching it ere it fell, I perceived his eyes riveted on the livid and terrific features of the corpse. My limbs grew stiff with horror; thoughts of strange import crowded on my mind; I knew not how to shape them into any definite form, but stood trembling and appalled before the dark chaos whence they sprung. Scarcely knowing what I said, still I remember the first enquiry that burst from my lips,—"Knowest thou that murdered man?"

The words were scarcely uttered, when the conscience-stricken wretch exclaimed, in accents which I shall never forget,—

"Know him!—yesterday he stood at my helm. I had long borne him an evil grudge, and I brooded on revenge. The devil prompted it—he was at my elbow. It was dark, and the fiend's eyes flashed when I aimed the blow. It descended with a heavy crash, and the body rolled overboard. He spoke not, save once; it was when his hated carcass rose to the surface. I heard a faint moan: it rung on my ear like the knell of death; the voice rushed past—a low sepulchral shout; in my ear it echoed with the cry of 'MURDER!'"

Little remains to be told: he persisted to the last in this horrible confession. He had no wish to live; and the avenging arm of retributive justice closed the world and its interests for ever on a wretch who had forfeited all claims to its protection—cast out, and judged unworthy of a name and a place amongst his fellow-men.

THE BAR-GAIST.

" From hag-bred Merlin's time have I
Thus nightly revell'd to and fro;
And for my pranks men call me by
The name of Robin Goodfellow.
Friends, ghosts, and sprites,
Who haunt the nightes,
The hags and goblins do me know;
And beldames old
My feates have told,
So *vale, vale;* ho, ho, ho!"

BEN JONSON.

THE BAR-GAIST.

"In the northern parts of England," says Brand, speaking of the popular superstitions, "ghost is pronounced *gheist* and *guest*. Hence *barguest* or *bargheist*. Many streets are haunted by a *guest*, who assumes many strange appearances, as a mastiff dog, &c. It is a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon ȝaſt, *spiritus anima*."

Drake, in his Eboracum, says (p. 7, Appendix), "I have been so frightened with stories of the barguest when I was a child, that I cannot help throwing away an etymology upon it. I suppose it comes from A. S. buph, a town, and ȝaſt, a ghost, and so signifies a town sprite. N.B. ȝaſt is in the Belgic and Teutonic softened into gheist and geyst."

The boggart or bar-gaist of the following story resembles the German *kobold*, the Danish *nis*, and the Scotch *brownie*; but, above all, the Spanish *duende*, which signifies a spirit or sprite, supposed by the vulgar to haunt houses and highways, causing therein much terror and confusion. "DUENDE. *Espiritu que el vulgo creeque infesta las casas y travesea, causando en ellas ruidos y estruendos.*"—LEMURES,

LARVÆ. "To appear like a *duende*," "to move like a *duende*," are modes of speaking by which it is meant that persons appear in places where they are least expected. "To have a *duende*," signifies that a person's imagination is disturbed.

The following curious Spanish "Moral," the MS. of which has been kindly lent to the author by Mr. Crofton Croker, may not be deemed uninteresting as an illustration of the subject. We have accompanied each stanza with a parallel translation of our own.

EL
DUENDE ENEMIGO DEL JUEGO.

Cuento Morál.

Un *Duende*, grave Señor,
Que estudió la astrologia,
Se propuso la manía.
De ser rico jugador.

Todos los siete planetas,
Formaban su gran consejo;
Y antes de llegar á viejo,
Ya no tenia calzetas.

Aburrido y sin dinero,
Mui tarde se arrepintió,
Y en un desban se metió
A llorar su error primero.

Por su gran sabiduría,
En duende se convirtió,
Y la guerra declaró,
Al arte de fullería.

La vecindad asombrada,
De sus fuertes alaridos,
Corriendo despavoridos,
Abandonan la Posada.

THE
DUENDE AN ENEMY TO GAMING.

A Moral Tale.

A grave and learned Senior, who
Practised astrology,
Bethought him by his lucky stars
He passing rich would be.

The planets seven his council made,
He hugg'd the glozing cheat;
But ere the pedant's legs were old,
No stockings held his feet!

Enraged and disappointed, he
Wax'd sour and melancholy,
And to a vintner's garret trudged,
There to bewail his folly.

"I'll have revenge," he cried,—then wrought
So wondrous cunningly,
That in a trice transform'd he was,—
A brisk *Duende* he.

This pedant, now a "Boggart" made,
No soul could rest in quiet:
Nor rogue nor bully was his match
For kicking up a riot.

Dueño absoluto ya el duende,
De la espaciosa mansion,
Se aumentó la confusion,
Y el temor entre la gente.

Pero siendo tan dëmente
El hombre que es codicioso,
No faltó quien jactancioso,
Despreciase al señor duende.

Unos cuantos jugadores,
Que llaman de profesion,
Eligieron la mansion
Para exercer sus primores.

Mui luego la compañía,
Numerosa vino á ser,
Y el que llegaba á perder,
Contra al duende maldecía.

La confusa gritería,
Pronto al duende incomodó,
Y al complot se apareció
Que ápenas, cuarta tenía.

En voz, como chirimía,
Dijoles cortés y atento
Que habitaba el dispuesto
Donde su amo existía.

Que en alta camara fiero,
Todo señor, reclamaba
El orden, y lo aperaba,
Aunque ageno de un fullero.

No fue poca la sorpresa,
Del mensage y la vision;
Y aun con todo, un temerón,
Quiso de ella hacer presa.

Mas el caso se fustró,
Sin saber como ni cuando,
Pues por el ayre volando
Nuestro duende se fugó,

El suceso maldecian
Los unos por el temor,
Y gritaban con furor
Los que el dinero perdian.

At last none dared that garret drear,
His dwelling, to come nigh;
Sole master of his attic, he
Reign'd peremptorily.

Not so the sharpers, who this house
Had made their special haunt:
"Señor Duende!—Humph!"—cried they
"May suck eggs with his aunt!"

They and their worthy company,
Of the black-limb'd profession,
Here cheated in a lawful way,
By that best right—possession!

The crowd increas'd. Some luckless wight,
His winnings at an end, he
Swore by his trumps, 't was owing to
That rascally *Duende!*

This roused him from his garret, where
He heard the daily squabble;
And lo, in human form, he stands
Before the shirtless rabble!

He squeak'd, "Your servant, gentlemen;
I would not thus intrude,
'Pon honour, but your conduct is
So very—very rude.

"My master,—he who sits up stairs
I mean,—no jesting, gents,—
Expects that you 'll be quiet, else
He 'll scold at all events."

The gamblers stared; some tumbled down,
Some gaped, some told their prayers;
But one, more daring, swore, i'fack,
He 'd kick the brute down stairs!

But ere he felt th' uplifted foot
He 'scaped,—how, none could tell;
But, sooth it was, this messenger
No bodily harm befel!

The rogues, who saw him disappear,
Wax'd paler than before:
Some said an *Ave;* some for fear,
And some for folly swore.

Vuelve por segunda vez,
El mensajero, crecido
Media vara, y atrevido,
Les dice, menos cortés.

Que su amo, era absoluto,
De aquella encantada casa,
Y su paciencia era escasa,
Con todo fullero astuto.

Que les mandaba sulir
De aquel lugar, con presteza,
Pues de no, su gentileza,
Los haria consumir.

Del duendecito quisieron
Apoderarse valientes,
Mas se les fué entre los dientes,
Y sin la presa se vieron.

Ya el temor empezó á obrar
Y entraron las reflexiones,
Apoyando con varones,
Que era Duende, á no dudar.

Como siempre al jugador,
Lo sostiene la esperanza,
Fundàron la confianza,
En que un Duende es vividor.

Que su ciencia atrae dinero,
Y medios paro adquirirlo,
Y era cuerdo el admitirlo,
Dandole el lugar primero.

Mas el duende que escuchaba
La trama de los fulleros,
Quiso en tales caballeros,
Vengàr, lo que suspiraba.

En efecto, agigantado,
Con negro manto talár,
Cornamenta singular,
Uñas largas y barbado.

Un garrote enarbolado
Y brotando espuma y fuego,
Les dijo: *Yo devo al juego*
Mi desgracia y este estado.

When suddenly amidst them all,
Again the demon stands;
A full half yard in stature grown!
Their business he demands.

"I tell ye, villains, gamblers, thieves!
His patience is but small,
With such as you,—so master says,
Who master will—you all!

"Out of the house, ye rabble rout!
Out of the house! I say,
Or otherwise his honour will
Consume ye utterly!"

Thought one, "I 'll seize this varlet vile,"
And speedily arose;
He caught him in his clutch—The sprite
Vanish'd and tweak'd his nose!

"San Jerome, save us, we are loo'd
If this should be the sprite;
The big *Duende*, best we bid
His boggartship good night."

But hope, the gambler's enemy,
Beguiled them to their ruin;
"These ugly sprites, they say, are rich,
Yet yield nought without wooing.

"His skill may help us to repair
Our cloaks, and eke our breeches;
Best speak him fair. We 'll worship Nick
If he but grant us riches!"

The sly *Duende*, like a mouse,
Hearkening behind the wall,
Did now resolve, he quickly would,
The greedy rogues bemaul.

A mighty giant, lo he comes,
Wrapp'd in a cloak of sable;
With horns, hoofs, nails, and beard yclad,
He jump'd upon the table!

A cudgel of some seven years growth
He brandish'd. Fire and smoke
Shot from his lips, while thus he spake,—
"I 'll gripe you gambling folk.

Los fulleros me han quitado
Con mi dinero, la vida,
Y pues que sois homicida
De todo hombre inocente!

No quedo vicho viviente,
En toda culta nacion,
Que ejérza la profesion
De fullero y vagamundo.

Y dando un grito profundo,
Su garrote descargando,
A todos fué despachando,
Sin dejar uno en el mundo.

"To gaming my disgrace I owe,
With money went my wife;
'Tis such as you the murderers be,—
This night shall end your life!

"In every nation, call'd refined,
Or gamblers or their wives,
Or wealthy wight shall ne'er be found,
Who shakes the bones and thrives."

With that a loud and horrid yell
He gave. And cudgel flew
Broadside amongst them; when, like vermin, he
Dispatch'd the hungry crew!

No extinguió, sin duda, el Duende,
Toda la mala semilla,
Pues hay muchos, como el Duende,
Sin camisa, y sin capilla.

But woe is me, they were not all destroy'd,
For many still, by these cursed arts decoy'd,
Shoeless and shirtless, miserable sinners,
Are seen, snuffing, with empty wind, their dinners!

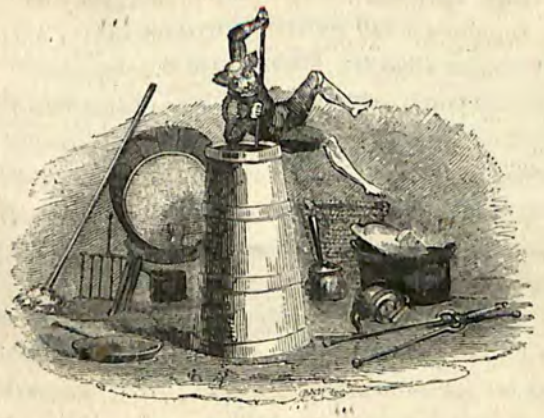
In the "*Danske Folkesagen,*" appear one or two circumstances relative to the freaks of a *nis*, the goblin of the Danish popular creed, similar to the pranks detailed in our Lancashire legend. Fancy, however sportive and playful with materials already in her possession, is of a much less creative character than is generally supposed, even by those most susceptible to her influence. It is surprising how few are the original conceptions that have sprung from the human mind. Popular superstitions, the great mass of them spread over an immense variety of surface, climate, manners, and opinions, might be supposed to exhibit a corresponding difference in originality and invention. But here we find the same paucity of incidents, varying only in character with the climate which gave them birth; the leading features being evidently common to each. The Scandinavian and the Hindoo, the European and the Asiatic, construct their

legends on the same basis; the same stories, and even the same train of events, proving their common origin.

Mr. Crofton Croker, a name familiar to all lovers of legendary lore, has kindly communicated the following tale. In substituting this, in place of what the author might have written on the subject, he feels convinced that his readers will not feel displeased at the change, and assures them it is with real gratification that he presents them with an article from the pen of the writer of "*The Fairy Legends.*"

THE

BAR-GAIST, OR BOGGART.



NOT far from the little snug, smoky village of Blakeley, or Blackley, there lies one of the most romantic of dells, rejoicing in a state of singular seclusion, and in the oddest of Lancashire names, to wit, the "Boggart-Hole." Rich in every requisite for picturesque beauty and poetical association, it is impossible for me (who am neither a painter nor a poet) to describe this dell as it should be described; and I will, therefore, only beg of thee, gentle reader, who, peradventure, mayst not have lingered in this classical neighbourhood, to fancy a deep, deep dell, its

steep sides fringed down with hazel and beech, and fern and thick undergrowth, and clothed at the bottom with the richest and greenest sward in the world. You descend, clinging to the trees, and scrambling as best you may,—and now you stand on haunted ground! Tread softly, for this is the Boggart's clough, and see in yonder dark corner, and beneath the projecting mossy stone, where that dusky, sullen cave yawns before us, like a bit of Salvator's best; there lurks that strange elf, the sly and mischievous Boggart. Bounce! I see him coming; oh no, it was only a hare bounding from her form; there it goes—there!

I will tell you of some of the pranks of this very Boggart, and how he teased and tormented a good farmer's family in a house hard by, and I assure you it was a very worthy old lady who told me the story. But, first, suppose we leave the Boggart's demesne, and pay a visit to the theatre of his strange doings.

You see that old farm-house about two fields distant, shaded by the sycamore tree: that was the spot which the Boggart or Bar-gaist selected for his freaks; there he held his revels, perplexing honest George Cheetham,—for that was the farmer's name,—scaring his maids, worrying his men, and frightening the poor children out of their seven senses; so that, at last, not even a mouse durst shew himself indoors at the farm, as he valued his whiskers, five minutes after the clock had struck twelve.

It had long been remarked that whenever a merry tale was told on a winter's evening, a small shrill voice was heard above all the rest, like a baby's penny trumpet, joining in with the laughter.

"Weel laughed, Boggart; thou 'rt a fine little tyke, I 'se warrant, if one could but just catch glent on thee," said

Robert, the youngest of the farmer's sons, early one evening, a little before Christmas, for familiarity had made them somewhat bold with their invisible guest. Now, though more pleasant stories were told on that night beside the hearth than had been told there for the three preceding months, though the fire flickered brightly, though all the faces around it were full of mirth and happiness, and though every thing, it might seem, was there which could make even a Boggart enjoy himself, yet the small shrill laugh was heard no more that night, after little Bob's remark.

Robert, who was a short, stout fellow for his age, slept in the same bed with his elder brother John, who was reckoned an uncommonly fine and tall lad for his years. No sooner had they got fairly to sleep, than they were roused by the small shrill voice in their room shouting out, "Little tyke, indeed! little tyke thysel'. Ho, ho, ho! I 'll have my laugh now—Ho, ho, ho!"

The room was completely dark, and all in and about the house was so still that the sound scared them fearfully. The concluding screech made the place echo again; but this strange laughter was not necessary to prevent little Robert from further sleep, as he found himself one moment seized by the feet and pulled to the bottom of the bed, and the next moment dragged up again on his pillow. This was no sooner done, than by the same invisible power he was pulled down again; and then his head would be dragged back, and placed as high as his brother's.

"Short and long won't match,—short and long won't match,—Ho, ho, ho!" shouted the well-known voice of the Boggart, between each adjustment of little Robert with

his tall brother, and thus were they both wearied for more than an hundred times; yet, so great was their terror, that neither Robert nor his brother—"Long John," as he ever afterwards was called, dared to stir one inch! And you may well suppose how delighted they both were when the first grey light of the morning appeared.

"We'st now ha' some rest, happen," said John, turning on his side in the expectation of a good nap, and covering himself up with the bedclothes, which the pulling of Robert so often backwards and forwards had tumbled about sadly.

"Rest,"—said the same voice that had plagued them through the night—"Rest!—what is rest? Boggart knows no rest."

"Plague tak thee for a Boggart!" said the farmer next morning, on hearing the strange story from his children: "Plague tak thee! can thee not let the poor things be quiet? But I'll be up with thee, my gentleman; so tak th' chamber an' be hang'd to thee, if thou wilt. Jack and little Robert shall sleep o'er the cart-house, and Boggart may rest or wriggle as he likes when he is by himsel'."

The move was accordingly made, and the bed of the brothers transferred to their new sleeping-room over the cart-house, where they remained for some time undisturbed. But his Boggartship having now fairly become the possessor of a room at the farm, it would appear, considered himself in the light of a privileged inmate, and not, as hitherto, an occasional visitor, who merely joined in the general expression of merriment. Familiarity, they say, breeds contempt; and now the children's bread and butter would be snatched away, or their porringers of bread and milk would be dashed to the ground by an unseen hand; or,

if the younger ones were left alone but for a few minutes, they were sure to be found screaming with terror on the return of their nurse. Sometimes, however, he would behave himself kindly. The cream was then churned, and the pans and kettles scoured without hands. There was one circumstance which was remarkable:—the stairs ascended from the kitchen; a partition of boards covered the ends of the steps, and formed a closet beneath the staircase. From one of the boards of this partition a large round knot was accidentally displaced; and one day the youngest of the children, while playing with the shoe-horn, stuck it into this knot-hole. Whether or not the aperture had been formed by the Boggart as a peep-hole to watch the motions of the family, I cannot pretend to say. Some thought it was, for it was called the Boggart's peep-hole; but others said that they had remembered it long before the shrill laugh of the Boggart was heard in the house. However this may have been, it is certain that the horn was ejected with surprising precision at the head of whoever put it there; and either in mirth or in anger the horn was darted forth with great velocity, and struck the poor child over the ear.

There are few matters upon which parents feel more acutely than that of the maltreatment of their offspring; but time, that great soother of all things, at length familiarised this dangerous occurrence to every one at the farm, and that which at the first was regarded with the utmost terror, became a kind of amusement with the more thoughtless and daring of the family. Often was the horn slipped slyly into the hole, and in return it never failed to be flung at the head of some one, but most commonly at the person who placed it there. They were

used to call this pastime, in the provincial dialect, "laking wi' t' Boggart;" that is, playing with the Boggart. An old tailor, whom I but faintly remember, used to say that the horn was often "pitched" at his head, and at the head of his apprentice, whilst seated here on the kitchen-table, when they went their rounds to work, as is customary with country tailors. At length the goblin, not contented with flinging the horn, returned to his night persecutions. Heavy steps, as of a person in wooden clogs, were at first heard clattering down stairs in the dead hour of darkness; then the pewter and earthen dishes appeared to be dashed on the kitchen floor; though in the morning all remained uninjured on their respective shelves. The children generally were marked out as objects of dislike by their unearthly tormentor. The curtains of their beds would be violently pulled to and fro,—then a heavy weight, as of a human being, would press them nearly to suffocation, from which it was impossible to escape. The night, instead of being the time for repose, was disturbed with screams and dreadful noises, and thus was the whole house alarmed night after night. Things could not long continue in this fashion; the farmer and his good dame resolved to leave a place where they could no longer expect rest or comfort; and George Cheetham was actually following with his wife and family the last load of furniture, when they were met by a neighbouring farmer named John Marshall.

"Weil, Georgey, and soa you're leaving th' ow'd house at last?" said Marshall.

"Heigh, Johnny, ma lad, I'm in a manner forced to 't, thou sees," replied the other: "for that wearyfu' Boggart torments us soa, we can neither rest neet nor day for 't.

It seems loike to have a malice again't young ans,—an' it ommost kills my poor dame here at thoughts on 't, and sea thou sees we 're forc'd to flitt like."

He had got thus far in his complaint, when, behold, a shrill voice from a deep upright churn, the topmost utensil on the cart, called out—"Ay, ay, neighbour, we 're flitting, you see."

"Od rot thee!" exclaimed George: If I 'd known thou 'd been flitting too, I wadn't ha stirred a peg. Nay, nay,—its to no use, Mally," he continued, turning to his wife, "we may as weel turn back again to th' owd house, as be tormented in another not so convenient."

They did return; but the Boggart having from the occurrence ascertained the insecurity of his tenure, became less outrageous, and was never more guilty of disturbing, in any extraordinary degree, the quiet of the family.

THE

HAUNTED MANOR-HOUSE.

" But he was wary wise in all his way,
And well perceived his deceitful sleight;
Ne suffered lust his safety to betray;
So goodly did beguile the *guiler* of the prey."

SPENSER.

Drawn by J. Pickering. Engraved by Edw.d Finden.

INCE HALL, NEAR WIGAN.

London, Published by Longman & Co 1820

THE

HAUNTED MANOR-HOUSE.

INCE-HALL, the subject of our view, stands about a mile from Wigan, on the left hand of the high road to Bolton. It is a very conspicuous object, its ancient and well-preserved front generally attracting the notice and enquiry of travellers.

About a mile to the south-east stands another place of the same name once belonging to the Gerards of Bryn. The manor is now the property of Charles Walmsley, Esq., of Westwood near Wigan.

The two mansions are sometimes confounded together in topographical enquiries; and the following story, though told of some former proprietor of the Ince to which our plate refers, yet, by its title of the "Manor-house," would seem as though intended for the other comparatively less known mansion—the old "Manor-house of Ince," once inhabited by a family of that name. But the same traditions are often found connected with localities widely asunder; so that we need not be surprised at the mistake which gossips have made in this particular instance.

It is, after all, quite uncertain whether the event occurred here or not, story-tellers being very apt to fix

upon any spot near at hand on which to fasten their marvellous narratives, and to give them a stronger hold on the listener's imagination.

The story is supposed to be written or related by the chief actor in the occurrences arising out of the "Haunted House." The author has thrown the narrative into this form, as he hopes it will vary the style of the traditions, and probably give more character and interest to the events here detailed than they would retain if told by a third person.

THE

HAUNTED MANOR-HOUSE.

The coach set me down at the entrance to a long and unweeded avenue. A double row of beech-trees saluted me, as I passed, with a rich shower of wet leaves, and shook their bare arms, growling as the large sough of the wind went through their decayed branches. The old house was before me. Its numerous and irregularly-contrived compartments in front were streaked in black and white zig-zags—*vandyked*, I think, the fairest jewels of the creation call this chaste and elegant ornament. It was near the close of a dark autumnal day, and a mass of gable-ends stood sharp and erect against the wild and lowering sky. Each of these pinnacles could once boast of its admired and appropriate ornament—a little weather-cock; but they had cast off their gilded plumage for ever, and fallen from their high estate, like the once neatly trimmed mansion which I was now visiting. A magpie was perched upon a huge stack of chimneys, his black and white plumage rivalling the mottled edifice at his feet. Perhaps he was the wraith, the departing vision of the decaying fabric; an apparition, insubstantial as the

honours and dignities of the ancient and revered house of ——— !

I looked eagerly at the long, low casements: a faint glimmer was visible. It proceeded only from the wan reflection of a sickly sunbeam behind me, struggling through the cleft of a dark hail-cloud. It was the window where in my boyhood I had often peeped at the town-clock through my little telescope. There was the nursery chamber, and no wonder that it was regarded with feelings of the deepest interest. Here the first dawnings of reason broke in upon my soul; the first faint gleams of intelligence awakened me from a state of infantine unconsciousness. It was here that I first drank eagerly of the fresh rills of knowledge; here my imagination, ardent and unrepressed, first plumed its wings for flight, and I stept forth over its threshold into a world long since tried, and found as unsatisfying and unreal as the false glimmer that now mocked me from the hall of my fathers.

A truce to sentiment!—I came hither, it may be, for a different purpose. A temporary gush will occasionally spring up from the first well-head of our affections. However homely and seemingly ill-adapted, in outward show and character, for giving birth to those feelings generally designated by the epithet romantic, the place where we first breathed, where our ideas were first moulded, formed and assimilated, as it were, to the condition of the surrounding atmosphere (their very shape and colour determined by the medium in which they first sprung), the casual recurrence of a scene like this,—forming part and parcel of our very existence, and incorporated with the very fabric of our thoughts,—must, in spite of all subsequent impressions, revive those feelings, however long

they may have been dormant, with a force and vividness which the bare recollection can never excite.

The garden-gate stood open. The initials of my name, still legible, appeared rudely carved on the posts—a boyish propensity which most of us have indulged; and I well remember ministering to its gratification wherever I durst hazard the experiment, when first initiated into the mystery of hewing out these important letters with a rusty penknife.

Not a creature was stirring; and the nature of the present occupants, whether sylphs, gnomes, or genii, was a question not at all, as it yet appeared, in a train for solution. The front door was closed; but, as I knew every turn and corner about the house, I made no doubt of soon finding out its inmates, if any of them were in the neighbourhood. I worked my way through the garden, knee-deep and rank with weed, for the purpose of reconnoitring the back-offices. I steered pretty cautiously past what memory, that great dealer in hyperbole, had hitherto generally contrived to picture as a huge lake—now, to my astonishment, dwindled into a duck-pond—but not without danger from its slippery margin. It still reposed under the shadow of the old cherry-tree, once the harbinger of delight, as the returning season gave intimation of another bountiful supply of fruit. Its gnarled stump, now stunted and decaying, had scarcely one token of life upon its scattered branches. Following a narrow walk, nearly obliterated, I entered a paved court. The first tramp awoke a train of echoes, that seemed as though they had slumbered since my departure, and now started from their sleep, to greet or to admonish the returning truant. Grass in luxuriant tufts, capriciously disposed,

grew about in large patches. The breeze passed heavily by, rustling the dark swathe, and murmuring fitfully as it departed. Desolation seemed to have marked the spot for her own—the grim abode of solitude and despair. During twenty years' sojourn in a strange land, memory had still, with untiring delight, painted the old mansion in all its primeval primness and simplicity—fresh as I had left it, full of buoyancy and delight, to take possession of the paradise which imagination had created. I had, indeed, been informed, that at my father's death it became the habitation of a stranger; but no intelligence as to its present condition had ever reached me. Being at L——, and only some twenty miles distant, I could not resist the temptation of once more gazing on the old manor-house, and of comparing its present aspect with that but too faithfully engrafted on my recollections. To all appearance the house was tenantless. I tried the door of a side-kitchen, or scullery: it was fastened, but the rusty bolts yielded to no very forcible pressure; and I once more penetrated into the kitchen, that exhaustless magazine, which had furnished ham and eggs, greens and bacon, with other delicious refections, to the progenitors of our race for at least two centuries. A marvellous change!—to me it appeared as if wrought in a moment, so recently had memory reinstated the scenes of my youth in all their pristine splendour. Now no smoke rolled lazily away from the heavy billet; no blaze greeted my sight; no savoury steam regaled the sense. Dark, cheerless, cold,—the long bars emitted no radiance; the hearth unswept, on which Growler once panted with heat and fatness.

Though night was fast approaching, I could not resist

the temptation of once more exploring the deserted chambers, the scene of many a youthful frolic. I sprang with reckless facility up the vast staircase. The shallow steps were not sufficiently accommodating to my impatience, and I leaped rather than ran, with the intention of paying my first visit to that *cockaigne* of childhood, that paradise of little fools—the nursery. How small, dwindled almost into a span, appeared that once mighty and almost boundless apartment, every nook of which was a separate territory, every drawer and cupboard the boundary of another kingdom! Three or four strides brought me to the window;—the broad church-tower was still visible, peacefully reposing in the dim and heavy twilight. The evening bell was tolling: what a host of recollections were awakened at the sound! Days and hours, long forgotten, seemed to rise up at its voice, like the spirits of the departed sweeping by, awful and indistinct. These impressions soon became more vivid; they rushed on with greater rapidity. I turned from the window, and was startled at the sudden moving of a shadow. It was a faint long-drawn figure of myself on the floor and opposite wall. Ashamed of my fears, I was preparing to quit the apartment, when my attention was arrested by a drawing which I had once scrawled, and stuck against the wall with all the ardour of a first achievement. It owed its preservation to an unlucky but effectual contrivance of mine for securing its perpetuity: a paste-brush, purloined from the kitchen, had made all fast; and the piece, alike impregnable to assaults or siege, withstood every effort for its removal. In fact, this could not be accomplished without at the same time tearing off a portion from the dingy papering of the room, and leaving a disagreeable void, instead of

my sprawling performance. With the less evil it appeared each succeeding occupant had been contented; and the drawing had stood its ground in spite of dust and dilapidation. I felt wishful for the possession of so valuable a memorial of past exploits. I examined it again and again, but not a single corner betrayed symptoms of lesion: it stuck bolt upright; and the dun squat figures portrayed on it appeared to leer at me most provokingly. Not a slip or tear presented itself as vantage-ground for the projected attack; and I had no other resource left of gaining possession than what may be denominated the Cæsarean mode. I accordingly took out my knife, and commenced operations by cutting out at the same time a portion of the ornamental papering from the wall, commensurate with the picture. I looked upon it with a sort of superstitious reverence; and I have always thought, that the strong and eager impulse I felt for the possession of this hideous daub proceeded from a far different source than mere fondness for the memorials of childhood. Be that as it may, I am a firm believer in a special Providence; and that, too, as discovered in the most trivial as well as the most important concerns of life. It was whilst cutting down upon what seemed like wainscoting, over which the papering of the room had been laid, that my knife glanced on something much harder than the rest. Turning aside my spoils, I saw what through the dusk appeared very like the hinge of a concealed door. My curiosity was roused, and I made a hasty pull, which at once drew down a mighty fragment from the wall, consisting of plaster, paper, and rotten canvass; and some minutes elapsed ere the subsiding cloud of dust enabled me to discern the *terra incognita* I had just uncovered.

Sure enough there was a door, and as surely did the spirit of enterprise prompt me to open it. With difficulty I accomplished my purpose; it yielded at length to my efforts; but the noise of the half-corroded hinges, grating and shrieking on their rusty pivots, may be conceived as sufficiently dismal and appalling. I know not if once at least I did not draw back, or let go my hold incontinently as the din "grew long and loud." I own, without hesitation, that I turned away my head from the opening, as it became wider and wider at every pull; and it required a considerable effort before I could summon the requisite courage to look into the gap. My head seemed as difficult to move as the door. I cannot say that I was absolutely afraid of ghosts, but I *was* afraid of a peep from behind the door—afraid of being frightened! At length, with desperate boldness, I thrust my head plump into the chasm!

But I was more startled at the noise I had thus produced than by any thing that was visible. As far as the darkness would permit, I explored the interior, which, after all, was neither more nor less than a small closet. From what cause it had been shut out from the apartment to which it belonged, it were vain to conjecture. All that was really cognisable to the senses presented itself in the shape of a shallow recess, some four feet by two, utterly unfurnished, save with some inches of accumulated dust and rubbish, that made it a work of great peril to grope out the fact of its otherwise absolute emptiness. This discovery, like many other notable enterprises, seemed to lead to nothing. I stept out of my den, reeking with spoils which I would much rather have left undisturbed in their dark recesses.

Preparing for my departure, and a visit to my relation in the nearly adjoining town, who as yet had no other intimation of my arrival than a hasty note, to apprise him that I had once more set foot on English ground, and intended to visit him before my return, I stepped again to the window. Darkness was fast gathering about me; a heavy scud was driven rapidly across the heavens, and the wind wailed in short and mournful gusts past the chamber. The avenue was just visible from the spot where I stood; and, looking down, I thought I could discern more than one dark object moving apparently towards the house. It may be readily conceived that I beheld their approach with an interest by no means free from apprehension; and it was not long ere two beings, in human habiliments, were distinctly seen at a short distance from the gate by which I had entered. Feeling myself an intruder, and not being very satisfactorily prepared to account for my forcible entry into the premises, and the injury I had committed on the property of a stranger, I drew hastily aside, determined to effect a retreat whenever and wherever it might be in my power. Door and window alternately presented themselves for the accomplishment of this unpleasant purpose, but before I could satisfy myself as to which was the more eligible offer, as doubters generally do contrive it, I lost all chance of availing myself of either. "*Facilis descensus*"—"Easier in than out"— &c., occurred to me; and many other classical allusions, much more appropriate than agreeable. I heard voices and footsteps in the hall. The stairs creaked, and it was but too evident they were coming, and that with a most unerring and provoking perseverance. Surely, thought I, these gentry have noses like the sleuth-hound; and I made no doubt

but they would undeviatingly follow them into the very scene of my labours: and what excuse could I make for the havoc I had committed? I stood stupified, and unable to move. The thoughts of being hauled neck and heels before the next justice, on a charge of housebreaking, or what not—committed to prison—tried, perhaps, and—the sequel was more than even imagination durst conceive. Recoiling in horror from the picture, it was with something like instinctive desperation that I flew to the little closet, and shut myself in, with all the speed and precision my fears would allow. Sure enough the brutes were making the best of their way into the chamber, and every moment I expected they would track their victim to his hiding-place. After a few moments of inconceivable agony, I was relieved at finding from their conversation that no notion was entertained, at present, of any witness to their proceedings.

"I tell thee, Gilbert, these rusty locks can keep nothing safe. It's but some few months since we were here, and thou knowest the doors were all fast. The kitchen door-post is now as rotten as touchwood; no bolt will fasten it."

"Nail it up,—nail 'em all up," growled Gilbert; "nobody 'll live here now; or else set fire to 't. It 'ill make a rare bonfire to burn that ugly old will in."

A boisterous laugh here broke from the remorseless Gilbert. It fell upon my ear as something with which I had once been disagreeably familiar. The voice of the first speaker, too, seemed the echo of one that had been heard in childhood. A friendly chink permitted me to gain the information I sought: there stood my uncle, and his trusty familiar. In my youth I had contracted

a somewhat unaccountable aversion to the latter personage. I well remembered his downcast grey eye, deprived of its fellow; and the malignant pleasure he took in thwarting and disturbing my childish amusements. This prepossessing Cyclop held a tinder-box, and was preparing to light a match. My uncle's figure I could not mistake: a score of winters had cast their shadows on his brow since we had separated; but he still stood as he was wont—tall, erect, and muscular, though age had slightly drooped his proud forehead; and I could discern his long-lapped waistcoat somewhat less conspicuous in front. He was my mother's brother, and the only surviving relation on whom I had any claim. My fears were set at rest, but curiosity stole into their place. I felt an irrepressible inclination to watch their proceedings, though eaves-dropping was a subterfuge that I abhorred. I should, I am confident,—at least I hope so,—have immediately discovered myself, had not a single word which I had overheard prevented me. The "will" to which they alluded might to me, perhaps, be an object of no trivial importance.

"I wish, with all my heart, it were burnt!" said my uncle.

"The will, or the house?" peevishly retorted Gilbert.

"Both!" cried the other, with an emphasis and expression that made me tremble.

"If we burn the house, the papers will not rise out of it, depend on't, master," continued Gilbert; "and that box, in the next closet, will not prove like Goody Blake's salamander."

I began to feel particularly uncomfortable.

"I wish they had all been burnt long ago," said mine

honest uncle.—After a pause he went on: "This scapegrace nephew of mine will be here shortly. For fear of accidents—accidents, I say, Gilbert—it were better to have all safe. Who knows what may be lurking in the old house, to rise up some day as a witness against us! I intend either to pull it down or set fire to it. But we'll make sure of the will first."

"A rambling jackanapes of a nephew!" said Gilbert; "I hoped the fishes had supped on him before now. We never thought, master, he could be alive, as he sent no word about his being either alive or dead. But I guess," continued this amiable servant, "he might ha' staid longer and you would n't ha' fretted for his company."

Listeners hear no good of themselves; but I determined to reward the old villain very shortly for his good wishes.

"Gilbert, when there 's work to do, thou art always readier with thy tongue than with thy fingers. Look! the match has gone out twice,—leave off puffing, and fetch the box; I 'll manage about the candle."

I began to feel a strange sensation rambling about me. Gilbert left the room, however, and I applied myself with redoubled diligence to the crevice. My dishonest relation proceeded to revive the expiring sparks: the light shone full upon his hard features. It might be fancy, but guilt, broad, legible, remorseless guilt, seemed to mark every inflection of his visage: his brow contracted,—his eye turned cautiously and fearfully round the apartment, and more than once it rested upon the gap I had made. I saw him strike his hand upon his puckered brow, and a stifled groan escaped him; but, as if ashamed of his

better feelings, he clenched it in an attitude of defiance, and listened eagerly for the return of his servant. The slow footsteps of Gilbert soon announced his approach, and apparently with some heavy burden. He threw it on the floor, and I heard a key applied and the rusty wards answering to the touch. The business in which they were now engaged was out of my limited sphere of vision.

"I think, master, the damps will soon ding down the old house: look at the wall; the paper hangs for all the world like the clerk's wig—ha, ha! If we should burn the house down, we'd rid it o' the ghosts. Would they stand fire, think you, or be off to cooler quarters?"

"Hush, Gilbert; thou art wicked enough to bring a whole legion about us, if any of them are within hearing. I always seemed to treat these stories with contempt, but I never could satisfy myself about the noises that old Gidlow and his wife heard. Thou knowest he was driven out of the house by them. People wondered that I did not come and live here, instead of letting it run to ruin. It is pretty generally thought that I fear neither man nor devil; but—O! here it is; here is the will. I care nothing for the rest, provided this be cancelled."

"Ay, master, they said the ghost never left off scratching as long as any body was in the room. Which room was it, I wonder?—I never thought on't to enquire; but—I don't like this a bit. It runs in my head it is the very place, and behind that wall, too, where it took up its quarters; like as it might be just a-back of the paper there. Think you, master, the old tyke has pull'd it down wi' scratching?"

"Gilbert," said my uncle solemnly, "I don't like these jests of thine. Save them, I pr'ythee, for fitter subjects. The will is what we came for. Let us dispose of that quietly, and I promise thee I'll never set foot here again."

As he spoke, he approached the candle;—it was just within my view, and opened the will, that it might yield the more readily to the blaze. I watched him evidently preparing to consume a document with which I felt convinced my welfare and interests were intimately connected. There was not a moment to be lost; but how to get possession was no easy contrivance. If I sallied forth to its rescue, they might murder me, or at least prevent its falling into my hands. This plan could only prolong its existence a few moments, and would to a certainty ensure its eventual destruction. Gilbert's dissertation on the occupations and amusements of the ghost came very opportunely to my aid, and immediately I put into execution what now appeared my only hope of its safety. Just as a corner of the paper was entering the flame, I gave a pretty loud scratch, at the same time anxiously observing the effect it might produce. I was overjoyed to find the enemy intimidated at least, by the first fire. Another volley, and another succeeded, until even the sceptical Gilbert was dismayed. My uncle seemed riveted to the spot, his hands widely disparted, so that the flame and its destined prey were now pretty far asunder. Neither of the culprits spoke; and I hoped that little more would be necessary to rout them fairly from the field. As yet they did not seem disposed to move; and I was afraid of a rally, should reason get the better of their fears.

"Rats! rats!" shouted Gilbert. "We'll singe their

tails for them." The scratching ceased. Again the paper was approaching to its dreaded catastrophe.

"*Beware!*" I cried, in a deep and sepulchral tone, that startled even the utterer. What effect it had produced on my auditory I was left alone to conjecture. The candle dropped from the incendiary's grasp, and the spoil was left a prey to the bugbear that possessed their imaginations. With feelings of unmixed delight, I heard them clear the stairs at a few leaps, run through the hall, and soon afterwards a terrific bellow from Gilbert announced their descent into the avenue.

Luckily the light was not extinct, and I lost no time in taking possession of the document which I considered of the most importance. A number of loose papers, the contents of a huge trunk, were scattered about; but my attention was more particularly directed to the paper which had been the object of my uncle's visit to the manor-house. To my great joy, this was neither less nor more than my father's will, witnessed and sealed in due form, wherein the possessions of my ancestors were conveyed, absolutely and unconditionally, without entail, unencumbered and unembarrassed, to me and to my assigns. I thought it most likely that the papers in and about the trunk might be of use, either as corroborative evidence, in case my uncle should choose to litigate the point and brand the original document as a forgery, or as a direct testimony to the validity of my claim. I was rather puzzled in what manner to convey them from the place, so as not to excite suspicion, should the two worthies return. I was pretty certain they would not leave matters as they now stood when their fears were allayed, and daylight would probably impart sufficient courage to induce

them to repeat their visit. On finding the papers removed, the nature of this night's ghostly admonition would immediately be guessed, and measures taken to thwart any proceedings which it might be in my power to adopt. To prevent discovery, I hit upon the following expedient.—I sorted out the waste paper, a considerable quantity of which served as envelopes to the rest, setting fire to it in such a manner that the contents of the trunk might appear to have been destroyed by the falling of the candle. I succeeded very much to my own satisfaction. Disturbed and agonized as my feelings had been during the discovery, the idea of having defeated the plan of my iniquitous relative gave a zest to my acquisitions almost as great as if I had already taken possession of my paternal inheritance.

Before I left the apartment, I poured out my heart in thanksgivings to that Unseen Power, whose hand, I am firmly convinced, brought me thither at so critical a moment, to frustrate the schemes and machinations of the enemy.

Bundling up the papers, my knowledge of the vicinity enabled me to reach a small tavern in the neighbourhood, without the risk of being recognised. Here I continued two or three days, examining the documents, with the assistance of an honest limb of the law from W——. He entertained considerable doubts as to the issue of a trial, feeling convinced that a forged will would be prepared, if not already in existence, and that my relative would not relinquish his fraudulent claim, should the law be openly appealed to. He strongly recommended that proceedings of a different nature should be first tried, in hopes of enclosing the villain in his own toils; and these,

if successful, would save the uncertain and expensive process of a suit. I felt unwilling to adopt any mode of attack but that of open warfare, and urged that possession of the real will would be sufficient to reinstate me as the lawful heir. The man of law smiled. He enquired how I should be able to prove, that the forgery which my uncle would in all probability produce was not the genuine testament: and, as the date would inevitably be subsequent to the one I held, it would annul any former bequest. As to my tale about burning the will, that might or might not be treated as a story trumped up for the occasion. I had no witnesses to prove the fact; and though appearances were certainly in my favour, yet the case could only be decided according to evidence. With great reluctance I consented to take a part in the scheme he chalked out for my guidance; and, on the third day from my arrival, I walked a few miles and returned to the town, that it might appear as if I had only just arrived. On being set down at my uncle's, I had the satisfaction to find, as far as could be gathered from his manner, that he had no idea of my recent sojourn in the neighbourhood. Of course the conversation turned on the death of my revered parents, and the way in which their property had been disposed of.

"I can only repeat," continued he, "what I, as the only executor under your father's will, was commissioned to inform you at his decease. The property was heavily mortgaged before your departure; and its continued depression in value, arising from causes that could not have been foreseen, left the executor no other alternative but that of giving the creditors possession. The will is here," said he, taking out a paper, neatly folded and mounted

with red tape, from a bureau. "It is necessarily brief, and merely enumerates the names of the mortgagees and amounts owing. I was unfortunately the principal creditor, having been a considerable loser from my wish to preserve the property inviolate. For the credit of the family I paid off the remaining incumbrances, and the estate has lapsed to me as the lawful possessor."

He placed the document in my hands. I read in it a very technical tribute of testamentary gratitude to M—— S——, Esq., styled therein "beloved brother," and a slight mention of my name, but no bequest, save that of recommending me to the kindness of my relative, in case it should please Heaven to send me once more to my native shores. I was aware he would be on the watch; guarding, therefore, against any expression of my feelings, I eagerly perused the deed, and with a sigh, which he would naturally attribute to any cause but the real one, I returned it into his hands.

"I find," said he, "from your letter received on the 23d current, that you are not making a long stay in this neighbourhood. It is better, perhaps, that you should not. The old house is sadly out of repair. Three years ago next May, David Gidlow, the tenant under lease from me, left it, and I have not yet been able to meet with another occupant fully to my satisfaction; indeed, I have some intention of pulling down the house, and disposing of the materials."

"Pulling it down!" I exclaimed, with indignation.

"Yes; that is, it is so untenantable—so—what shall I call it?—that nobody cares to live there."

"I hope it is not haunted?"

"Haunted!" exclaimed he, surveying me with a severe

and scrutinising glance. "What should have put that into your head?"

I was afraid I had said too much; and, anxious to allay the suspicion I saw gathering in his countenance, "Nay, uncle," I quickly rejoined; "but you seemed so afraid of speaking out upon the matter, that I thought there must needs be a ghost at the bottom of it."

"As for that," said he, carelessly, "the foolish farmer and his wife did hint something of the sort; but it is well known that I pay no attention to such tales. The long and the short of it, I fancy, was, that they were tired of their bargain, and wanted me to take it off their hands."

Here honest Gilbert entered, to say that Mr. L——, the attorney, would be glad to have a word with his master.

"Tell Mr. L—— to walk in. We have no secrets here. Excuse me, nephew; this man is one of our lawyers. He has nothing to communicate but what you may hear, I dare say. If he should have any private business, you can step into the next room."

The attorney entering, I was introduced as nephew to Mr. S——, just arrived from the Indies, and so forth. Standing, Mr. L—— made due obeisance.

"Sit down; sit down, Mr. L——," cried my uncle. "You need not be bowing there for a job. Poor fellow! he has not much left to grease the paws of a lawyer. Well, sir, your errand?"

"I came, Mr. S——, respecting the manor-house. Perhaps you would not have any objections to a tenant?"

"I cannot say just now. I have had some thoughts of pulling it down."

"Sir! you would not demolish a building, the growth

of centuries,—a family mansion—been in the descent since James's time. It would be barbarous. The antiques would be about your ears."

"I care nothing for the antiquities; and, moreover, I do not choose to let the house. Any further business with me this morning, Sir?"

"Nothing of consequence—I only came about the house."

"Pray, Mr. L——," said I, "what sort of a tenant have you in view;—one you could recommend? I think my uncle has more regard for the old mansion-house than comports with the outrage he threatens. The will says, if I read aright, that the house and property may be sold, should the executor see fit; but, as to pulling it down, I am sure my father never meant any thing so deplorable. Allow me another glance at that paper."

"Please to observe, nephew, that the will makes it mine, and as such I have a right to dispose of the whole in such manner as I may deem best. If you have any doubts, I refer you to Mr. L——, who sits smiling at your unlawyer-like opinions."

"Pray allow me one moment," said the curious attorney. He looked at the signature, and those of the parties witnessing.

"Martha S——; your late sister, I presume?"

My uncle nodded assent.

"Gilbert Hodgon,—your servant?"

"The same. To what purpose, Sir, are these questions?" angrily enquired my uncle.

"Merely matters of form,—a habit we lawyers cannot easily throw aside whenever we get a sight of musty parchments. I hope you will pardon my freedom?"

"Oh! as for that, you are welcome to ask as many questions as you think proper: they will be easily answered, I take it."

"Doubtless," said the persevering man of words. "Whenever I take up a deed, for instance,—it is just the habit of the thing, Mr. S——,—I always look at it as a banker looks at a note. He could not, for the life of him, gather one up without first ascertaining that it was genuine."

"Genuine!" exclaimed my uncle, thrown off his guard. "You do not suspect that I have forged it?"

"Forged it! why how could that enter your head Mr. S——? I should as soon suspect you of forging a bank-note, or coining a guinea. Ringing a guinea, Sir, does not at all imply that the payee suspects the payer to be an adept in that ingenious and much abused art. We should be prodigiously surprised if the payer were to start up in a tantrum, and say, 'Do you suspect me, Sir, of having coined it?'"

"Sir, if you came hither for the purpose of insulting *me*——"

"I came upon no such business, Mr. S——; but, as you seem disposed to be captious, I *will* make free to say, and it would be the opinion of ninety-nine hundredths of the profession, that it might possibly have been a little more satisfactory to the heir-apparent, had the witnesses to this, the most solemn and important act of a man's life, been any other than, firstly, a defunct sister to the party claiming the whole residue; and, secondly, Mr. Gilbert Hodgon, his servant. Nay, Sir," said the pertinacious lawyer, rising, "I do not wish to use more circumlocution than is necessary; I have stated my suspicions, and if you are

an honest man, you can have no objections, at least, to satisfy your nephew on the subject, who seems, to say the truth, much astonished at our accidental parley."

"And, pray, who made you a ruler and a judge between us?"

"*I* have no business with it, I own; but as you seemed rather angry, I made bold to give an opinion on the little technicalities aforesaid. If you choose, Sir," addressing himself to me, "the matter is now at rest."

"Of course," I replied, "Mr. S—— will be ready to give every satisfaction that may be required, as regards the validity of the witnesses. I request, uncle, that you will not lose one moment in rebutting these insinuations. For your own sake and mine, it is not proper that your conduct should go forth to the world in the shape in which this gentleman may think fit to represent it."

"If he dare speak one word ——"

"Nay, uncle, that is not the way to stop folks' mouths now-a-days. Nothing but the actual gag, or a line of conduct that courts no favour and requires no concealment, will pass current with the world. I request, Sir," addressing myself to the attorney, "that you will not leave this house until you have given Mr. S—— the opportunity of clearing himself from any blame in this transaction."

"As matters have assumed this posture," said Mr. L——, "I should be deficient in respect to the profession of which I have the honour to be a member, did I not justify my conduct in the best manner I am able. Have I liberty to proceed?"

"Proceed as you like, you will not prove the testament to be a forgery. The signing and witnessing were done

in my presence," said my uncle. He rose from his chair, instinctively locked up his bureau; and, if such stern features could assume an aspect of still greater asperity, it was when the interrogator thus continued:—"You were, as you observe, Mr. S——, an eye-witness to the due subscription of this deed. If I am to clear myself from the imputation of unjustifiable curiosity, I must beg leave to examine yourself and the surviving witness apart, merely as to the minutiæ of the circumstances under which it was finally completed: for instance, was the late Mr. ——— in bed, or was he sick, or well, when the deed was executed?"

A cadaverous hue stole over the dark features of the culprit; their aspect varying and distorted, in which fear and deadly anger painfully strove for pre-eminence.

"And wherefore apart?" said he, with a hideous grin. He stamped suddenly on the floor.

"If that summons be for your servant, you might have saved yourself the trouble, Sir," said his tormentor, with great coolness and intrepidity. "Gilbert is at my office, whither I sent him on an errand, thinking he would be best out of the way for a while. I find, however, that we shall have need of him. It is as well, nevertheless, that he is out of the reach of signals."

"A base conspiracy!" roared the infuriated villain, "Nephew, how is this? And in my own house,—bullied —baited! But I will be revenged,—I will ——"

Here he became exhausted with rage, and sat down. On Mr. —— attempting to speak, he cried out—"I will answer no questions, and I defy you. Gilbert may say what he likes; but he cannot contradict my words. I'll speak none."

"These would be strange words, indeed, Mr. S——, from an innocent man. Know you that WILL?" said the lawyer, in a voice of thunder, and at the same time exhibiting the real instrument so miraculously preserved from destruction. I shall never forget his first look of horror and astonishment. Had a spectre risen up, arrayed in all the terrors of the prison-house, he could not have exhibited more appalling symptoms of unmitigated despair. He shuddered audibly. It was the very crisis of his agony. A portentous silence ensued. Some minutes elapsed before it was interrupted. Mr. L—— was the first to break so disagreeable a pause.

"Mr. S——, it is useless to carry on this scene of duplicity: neither party would be benefited by it. *You have forged that deed!* We have sufficient evidence of your attempt to destroy this document I now hold, in the very mansion which your unhallowed hands would, but for the direct interposition of Providence, have levelled with the dust. On one condition, and on one only, your conduct shall be concealed from the knowledge of your fellow-men. The eye of Providence alone has hitherto tracked the tortuous course of your villany. On one condition, I say, the past is for ever concealed from the eye of the world." Another pause. My uncle groaned in the agony of his spirit. Had his heart's blood been at stake, he could not have evinced a greater reluctance than he now showed at the thoughts of relinquishing his ill-gotten wealth.

"What is it?"

"Destroy with your own hands that forged testimony of your guilt. Your nephew does not wish to bring an old man's grey hairs to an ignominious grave."

He took the deed, and, turning aside his head, committed it to the flames. He appeared to breathe more freely when it was consumed; but the struggle had been too severe even for his unyielding frame, iron-bound though it seemed. As he turned trembling from the hearth, he sunk into his chair, threw his hands over his face, and groaned deeply. The next moment he fixed his eyes steadily on me. A glassy brightness suddenly shot over them; a dimness followed like the shadows of death. He held out his hand; his head bowed; and he bade adieu to the world and its interests for ever!

THE END.

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Should the style and plan of this Work meet the public approbation, another Series of Lancashire Traditions will immediately be put to press, and the Author pledges himself that the delay which has occurred in the completion of the present Volumes shall not again take place.

The Second Series may probably be expected in a very few months. The following is a list of subjects:—

The Dead Man's Hand.
A Legend of Bewsey (*with an Engraving*).
The Mermaid of Martin Mere.
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